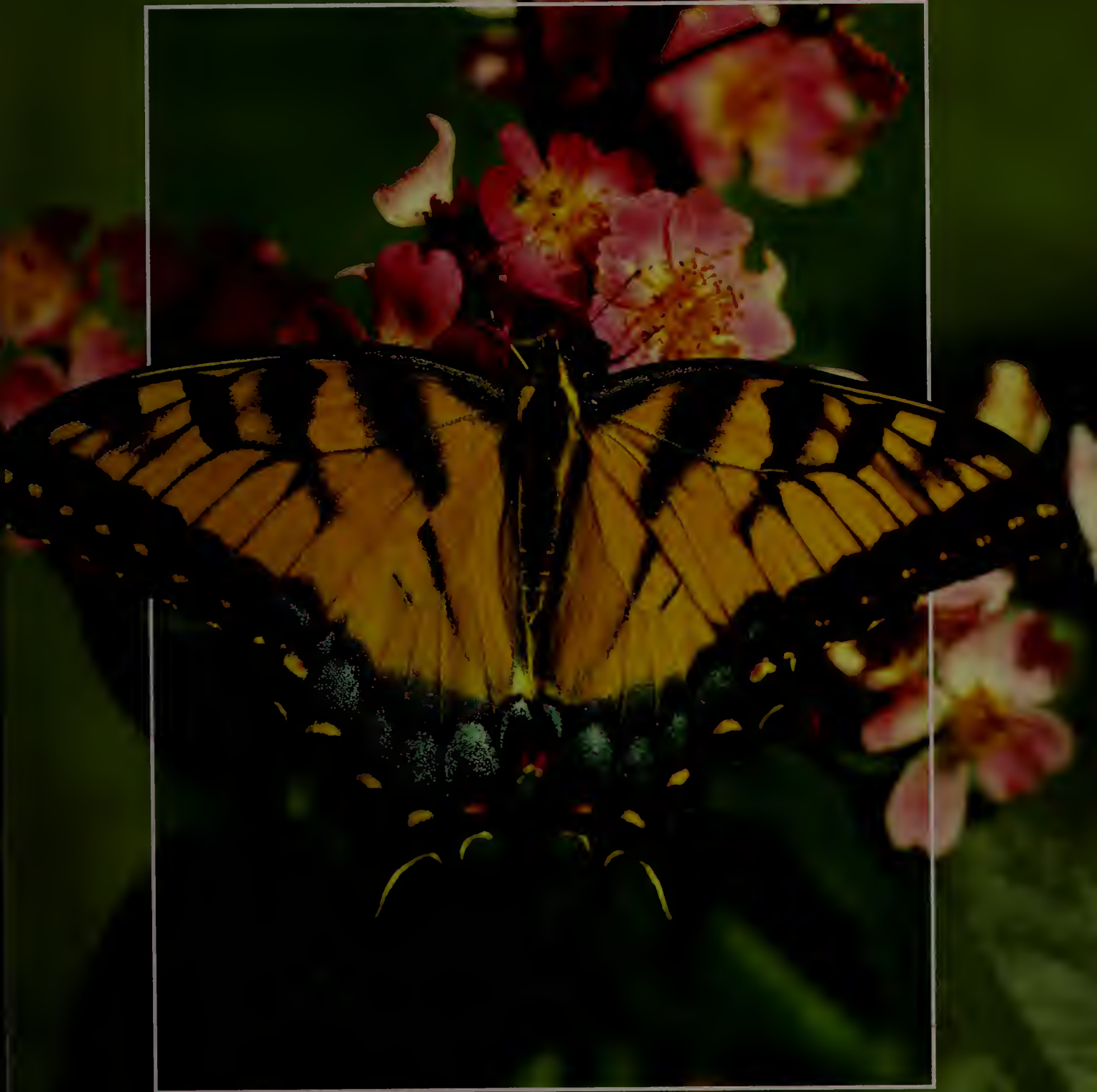


VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

JULY 1991

ONE DOLLAR





Director's Column

William L. Woodfin, Jr

For many of us July spells fun, sun, and relaxation. We spend all year looking forward to this month. As a matter of fact, we spend as much or more time planning where to go and what to do, than the actual time doing it. The precious time we all have to recuperate from a hard years worth of work should be a very important time for us to spend wisely. To help you with hard decisions for this summer, I spent a little time researching some special places and activities that might make this a memorable summer for you and your family.

If fishing is high on your list of activities, let me suggest a couple of locations. The department manages thousands of miles of streams and over 150 lakes. Nestled in the mountains of southwestern Virginia are two wonderful places—managed in a way to hook even the most inexperienced angler.

Clinch Mountain and Crooked Creek are best described as sure bets if you're looking for a place to catch fish and enjoy cool walks along beautiful mountain trails. Both areas are stocked with trout several times a week. This assures that your chances of catching the limit are good. A small fee is charged to operate these unique fisheries.

If you prefer sand and marshes to mountains and cold water streams, then consider Virginia's Eastern Shore.

Located at the very tip, and just off the mainland, is Mochorn Island Wildlife Management Area. This mainly tidal marsh is probably one of

the most remote locations to which you can travel and yet remain in Virginia. It's so remote that the only way to get to it is by boat. Unspoiled beaches, great fishing and bird watching (for any of the 113 recorded species in the area) all make Mochorn Island a paradise.

July makes a great time to explore the many areas open to the public for hunting (though the season is closed for almost all species. Trading your gun for binoculars and a good walking stick can be very rewarding. It's also a wonderful time to become familiar with and to admire the beautiful flora, along with wildlife that share the forest.

I think one of the reasons I like living in Virginia is the fact that there are so many special places available to visit. If you enjoy spending time in the outdoors, really don't mix well with big crowds, and dislike lots of noise, then try some of these out-of-the-way vacations.

In an effort to guide you to great fishing and wildlife watching, the department has two outdoor publications. *The Freshwater Fishing Guide* and the *Wildlife Watchers Guide—A County by County Guide to Virginia's wildlife*.

Both of the above guides can be ordered free of charge by contacting the department at:

Phone: 804/367-1000 V/TDD

FAX: 804/367-3147

Internet: www.state.va.us/~dgif/index.htm



Lee Walker

Also, I would like to recommend another great travel guide published by the Virginia Tourism Cooperation called *Virginia Outdoors—The Official Outdoor Recreation Guide*. With over 100 pages, this publication is an excellent resource for exploring Virginia. You can order this guide by contacting the Virginia Tourism Cooperative at:

Phone: 804/786-4484

Toll free: (800) VISIT VA or 847-4882

FAX: 804/786-1919

Internet: <http://www.VIRGINIA.org>

No matter where you decide to go this summer, or what you decide to do, I hope that you have lots of fun and enjoy Virginia's natural resources safely. From all of us here at DGIF, we hope that your vacation is a *wild* one.

Mission Statement

To manage Virginia's wildlife and inland fish to maintain optimum populations of all species to serve the needs of the Commonwealth; to provide opportunity for all to enjoy wildlife, inland fish, boating and related outdoor recreation; to promote safety for persons and property in connection with boating, hunting and fishing.

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VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

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Dedicated to the Conservation of Virginia's Wildlife and Natural Resources

VOLUME 59

NUMBER 7

A scenic view of a river, likely the James River, with a large tree on the left and a boat in the distance. The text is overlaid on the image.

Float Fishing Trips on Virginia's Best Mouth Waters

*It doesn't get any better than this if
you're looking for a way to cool off during
the hot summer months.*

by Bruce Ingram

The July day supplied all the pleasures that I relish about float fishing an Old Dominion waterway. My wife Elaine and I had journeyed from our Botetourt County home to paddle the South Fork of the Shenandoah with Christian and Angela Goebel who operate Shenandoah River Outfitters in Luray.

On my first cast of the morning, a 13-inch smallmouth roared up from the depths to smash my Tiny Torpedo. Shortly afterwards, Christian employed a madtom to fool a two-pound bronzeback. Angela was then able to corral a nice smallmouth while Elaine, her boat mate, held the canoe steady in an eddy. Later we enjoyed dining on a shore lunch, watching a flock of wood ducks as well as an osprey, and cruising through several Class I rapids. All in all, a marvelous way to spend a summer day.

No state in the country can boast the number of quality smallmouth bass rivers than Virginia can. Perhaps the Old Dominion's four best are the South Fork, the James, the New, and the Rappahannock. Here are some of the most inviting float trips on each.

The South Fork of the Shenandoah

Christian Goebel favors the 27 miles of the South Fork from Inskip to Foster's for summertime outings. The first leg of the journey, the nine miles from Inskip to Foster's, is characterized by riffles, pools, and some outstanding angling for bronzebacks.

The 18 miles from Foster's to Bentonville is my favorite section of the South Fork. Look for a number of deep water ledges—the prime habitat for jumbo smallmouths. Numerous Class I and II rapids—and the pools below them—create more excellent bass locales. Three Forest Service canoe ramps interrupt this sec-

tion, enabling paddlers to create a variety of full-day or half-day floats. Also good is the six-miler from Simpson to Front Royal—water willow beds and riffles characterize this excursion.

Given its general lack of major rapids, the South Fork is probably the easiest of our quartet to float fish. For a budding angler wishing to experience a river for the first time, this arm of the Shenandoah is a solid choice.



Shenandoah River ©Bruce Ingram

Many of Virginia's rivers are well suited for family trips. To assure that you will have a good time, always put safety first before heading out on the water.

The James River

Every year, I float the James several dozen times, and I am constantly amazed at the great diversity of fish habitat present. For example, on the upper reaches of the waterway, the 20.6 miles from Buchanan to Snowden features numerous Class I and II rapids, an abundance of water willow beds, and plenty of sycamore shrouded banks.

The five-mile journey from Buchanan to Arcadia is a superlative morning getaway (the angle of the sun and its glare results in this being a less appealing afternoon trip). The 12.6 miles from Arcadia to Glasgow makes for a long, but enticing day on the water. This section encompasses some outstanding big bass hangouts—check out undercut banks in 5 to 10 feet of water.

For whitewater fans, the three miles from Glasgow to Snowden is a must. This section includes the famous Balcony Falls, a Class III rapid that can be very challenging. The fishing above and below Balcony is exceptional, however. I have caught a number of 2 to 3 pound smallmouths from the well aerated water of the Glasgow junket.

The Piedmont section of the James, which is basically from Lynchburg to Scottsville, also has



James River ©Bruce Ingram

much to offer. The 12.4 miles from Bent Creek to Wingina is perhaps the most well-known float on this part of the James, primarily because of its deep water ledges that harbor overgrown smallies. The 2.2 miles from Wingina to the James River WMA is short in length, but long in fishing opportunities. The water willow beds, riffles and pools are so productive that one can easily spend a half day there. And the islands and riffles found along the 8.6 mile section from Howardsville to Scottsville attract many float fishermen. An effective strategy is to fish the cuts along the islands and the eddies below them.

The New River

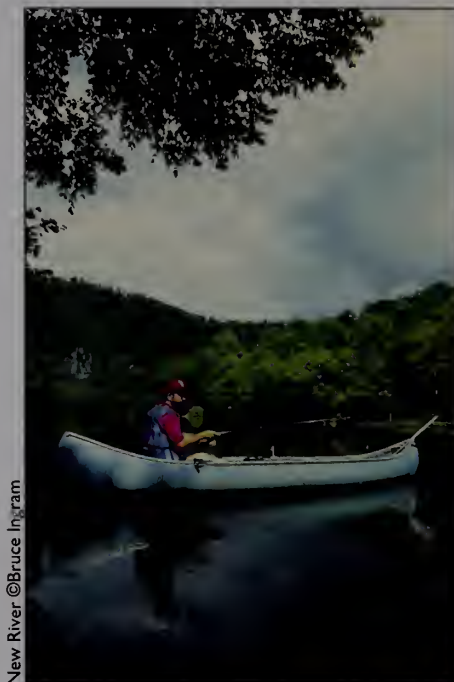
For two western Virginia streams that are so close together in terms of distance, the James and New "fish" quite differently. For example, an individual can cruise the shoreline of the James throughout the summer and contact good-sized smallmouths. On the New, though, the best action typically occurs out in the middle of the river along the main channel. A productive game plan is to seek out mid-river drop-offs, pools, and eddies.

Shawn Hash, who operates Tangent Outfitters in Dublin, says many people tend to have misconceptions about the New.

"First, I think a lot of fishermen don't realize that the New above Claytor Lake has some very productive sections even though the upper river is much smaller in size than the section below Claytor.

"Second, when many people think of the lower New, they have this vision of a dangerous river with lots of white water. Actually, except for the section from Ripplemead to Bluff City, the lower New has a number of trips that intermediate and beginning paddlers can take."

On the upper New, one of the better excursions is the 12-miler from Independence to Baywood. Deep pools, scattered riffles, and water willow beds characterize this full-day float. The gentle meanderings of the Independence trip cause it to be



New River ©Bruce Ingram



Rappahannock River ©Bruce Ingram

Virginia is blessed with some of the best rivers for smallmouth bass fishing in the country. Sunfish, rock bass, carp, walleye, and even muskies are just a few of the other fish species that anglers will tie into while wading or floating down these rivers.

a fine one for inexperienced canoeists.

Below Claytor Lake dam, several jaunts stand out. The Eggleston to Pembroke journey of six miles is re-

plete with Class I rapids, towering rock formations, and in my opinion, the most consistent smallmouth action on the entire New. An ideal late afternoon trip for the fly fisherman is the two-miler from Pembroke to Ripplemead. Water willow beds dot this section throughout and the afternoon and evening hatches can result in mesmerizing dry fly sport.

If you are an expert canoeist, the 7.5 miles from Ripplemead to Bluff City is a must. This section flaunts at least a half dozen Class II rapids and a number of Class I's as well. But because of the swift water, the Ripplemead float probably receives less fishing pressure than many New River trips, and it also possesses some true lunger mossybacks.

The Rappahannock River

The Rappahannock basically of-



Shenandoah River ©Dwight Dyke

fers only two main float trips—a five-miler from Remington to Kelly's Ford and a 24.5 journey from Kelly's Ford to Motts Landing. What the Rappahannock lacks in quantity of excursions, it more than makes up in quality of experience.

For instance, the Remington junket features the remains of an old canal and a dam, a half-mile long rock garden, and myriads of ledges, boulders, and riffles. Generally, I allot one hour of "fishing time" per each mile of river covered. But plan to spend most of the day on the Remington section, and be sure to probe the many smallmouth sanctuaries on it.

No public access points interrupt the Rappahannock from Kelly's Ford to Mott's Landing. Bill Micks, who operates the Rappahannock Outdoor Educational Center in

Fredericksburg, says this is a capital junket for scouts, church, and youth groups that want to experience "roughing it" on a river.

I generally spend two long days on the Kelly's Ford float, but actually this is a trip better suited for a three-day sojourn. The presence of bald eagles, the lack of human development, the multitude of smallmouth bass hot spots, and the tranquility of this wilderness river make one want to linger on this leg of the Rappahannock.

Like the previous section, the Kelly's Ford segment consists of the remains of old locks and dams, sand bars, majestic in-stream boulders, and a number of Class I and II rapids.

One of the best places to fish and the most idyllic spot to camp out is at the commingling of the Rappa-

hannock and Rapidan some 16 miles into the journey. A rock garden marks their merger, and canoeists may have to engage in some deft maneuvering around the many partially submerged boulders. Not surprisingly, the smallmouth fishing around and below this rocky cover can be topflight.

Do I have a favorite among this quartet? For big bass, I would give the nod to the James and the New. For aesthetics, the Rappahannock is definitely my favorite. For sheer fishing pleasure and ease of canoeing, the South Fork of the Shenandoah ranks first. One thing is for certain, Virginia float fishermen can't go wrong if they visit any of these waterways this summer. □

Bruce Ingram is an outdoor columnist on the staff of Southern Outdoors.





Planting the

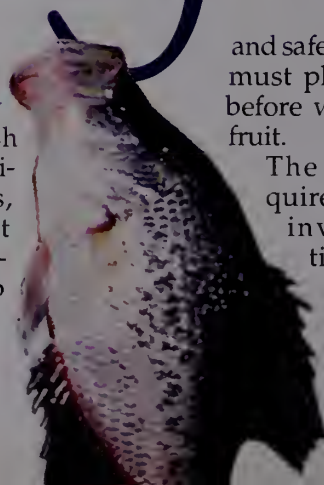
by Joe Lively

*They're only kids
once, so teach
them right.*

Just as industry and business must periodically supply itself with a fresh work force from the Nation's universities and technical schools, American tradition requires that those who enjoy our outdoor heritage be trained in stewardship

and safety. But first, we must plant the seeds before we harvest the fruit.

The process requires a generous investment in time by somebody. Don't





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to ethics, plus awareness of a need for safety.

One does not have to be a behavioral specialist to understand the frustration of teachers, counselors and law enforcement officials when they comment on the growing problems of today's young people. A concern shared by many of these professionals is that youth problems of today are directly linked to lack of time spent in pursuit of directed outdoor activities. There is also agreement that children have a strong curiosity about anything pertaining to the natural world. Unfortunately, many troubled young people belong to a dysfunctional family, have a single working parent or are part of a family where both parents are working long hours. Such an arrangement often denies parents the luxury of spending direct time with their youngsters.

Teachers see examples everyday, especially in middle school. Symptoms are classic. Behavior is typically immature, often extreme. Many children manifest no respect for themselves, their teachers or fellow classmates. They can't understand respect because no one adult has entrusted them with responsibility. By the time hormones start flowing, it is often too late to start worrying about their problems. The die may have been set.

On the other pan of the balance are the many well adjusted young

people with above average school and social performance. These have started to savor the cornucopia of outdoor activities with a family member. Here, seeds have been planted. These children have all been exposed to the outdoors, interests have been nurtured and values



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The outdoors is a wonderful place to instill important values that will be with children throughout their lives. Respecting others, understanding consequences for their actions, learning good ethics and following strong personal commitments can all be found while enjoying such activities as hunting, fishing and boating.

Seeds

get the idea that repeated exposure alone will suffice for proper training. Any equation for a positive metamorphosis in our young people calls for leadership by example. Variables must include respect for others, an understanding of consequences for their actions, understanding and personal commitment



©Dwight Dyke



instilled. They are well on their way to becoming focused, productive and responsible young adults. Principles of stewardship and safety have been transferred—the plant is growing.

Another important observation by educators is that young people who have demonstrated some success in outdoor activities receive recognition for their accomplishments. Parents have a simple, but enormously powerful tool available to help them reinforce the significance of their progeny's learning experiences. That tool is called praise. Children crave praise and usually respond well to it when it is used as a reward for a job well done.

One subtle, but effective way to lavish praise would be to get out the camera and burn some film. Take candid shots rather than set-up shots. Try showing the child as he or she learns responsibility—warts and all. Show them catching that first scrappy bluegill or bass, the overnight canoe trip, taking the

hunter or water safety course and the success of their hunting excursions. Try shots of your child as they discover the wonders of nature, i.e. photographing birds at a feeder. Then, sit down and discuss the positive aspects of their experience.

Next, DARE to submit those photos to the scrutiny of your child's peers and the public. Many parents are pleasantly surprised with the result of their bravery. At this point, your child indelibly entrenches both his values and self confidence. He or she now commands the self respect so necessary to influence others in positive enduring ways. And so, insidiously, the child learns about "therapy of spirit" each time he ventures out into the natural world. They will treasure this jewel for as long as they live.

OK, where does a parent with limited time and experience find help in molding their children?

The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) has a wealth of information—free

If you're looking for a way to put a positive spin on a youngsters life and aren't sure where to start, then look to outdoor organizations and groups to help you. State agencies like the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and the Department of Conservation and Recreation offer a variety of activities for children. Organizations such as the Boy Scouts, 4-H, Future Farmers of America and the Izaak Walton League are also willing to help.

for the asking. This splendid state institution banks on a very special premise: that any future enjoyment of our vast natural blessings is totally dependent upon educating our youth. There is a staff of biologists, wardens, education coordinators and volunteer instructors who are committed to spending considerable time working with kids and their families. Their objectives are simple: Teach the merits of stewardship, environmentally sound biology and safety so that present and future generations of Virginians may enjoy what we have today. Those who have witnessed the impact that VDGIF can have upon young peo-



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ple regret but one thing: That our dedicated game biologists and wardens go about their daily duties with so little public awareness and recognition for their top level performance. These men and women are truly the quiet heroes of today.

Another source of wholesome and varied training is provided by Virginia's 4-H camps and shooters camps. This past year, campers from around the state met at Holiday Lake 4-H Center in historic Buckingham County (This is one of six 4-H centers in Virginia).

According to Mike Clifford, Virginia Co-operative Extension Agent and camp director, young men and women ranging in age from 9 to 18, eagerly participated in programs designed to build self confidence and responsible leadership. A broad spectrum of outdoor activities were available. Nature appreciation, archery, rifle, canoeing, fishing, swimming and the high ropes courses were favorites and challenged each camper at their own pace.

Guidance in each discipline was provided by a highly trained staff of counselors and junior counselors in one of the most scenic state owned areas. Additional support was and is given each year, for the shooters camp, by Virginia's Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.

A unanimous assessment among campers was that this four-day opportunity each summer gave them not only tremendous fun working with other campers and leaders, but a head start in general leadership training for life and confidence that they could enjoy whatever outdoor activity of their choice safely and responsibly.

Parents of these young nimrods, hoping to pass on our traditions and heritage, could wish for no greater reward than for this positive prognosis to become reality for their youngsters. Now, we can begin to taste the fruit from those seeds we planted. And the fruit is sweet. □

Joe Lively is an avid outdoorsman, freelance writer and photographer who teaches high school in Amelia County.



Dwight Dyke



Partners in Wildlife

An army of silent soldiers is working to improve habitat for Virginia's wildlife.

by David Hart

*Y*ou might not notice, but volunteers are hard at work right now, repairing, restoring and revitalizing fish and wildlife habitat. The next time

you go hunting, fishing or hiking, take a look around. Is the old rusty refrigerator that sat in the middle of your favorite trout stream gone? How about the cans and bottles that littered the stream banks or those old tires carelessly dumped into the ravine you cross to get to your tree

Wildlife

More and more people across America and Virginia are banding together and joining outdoor organizations and conservation groups in an effort to have a stronger voice in the shaping of our natural resources.

stand? Where did they go? Chances are, a member of one of Virginia's many conservation groups helped get that trash out of the woods or water and haul it off to its rightful resting place.

Of course, members of these organizations don't spend all their time cleaning up garbage left behind by others. Groups like the Ruffed Grouse Society, Trout Unlimited and Quail Unlimited, to name a few, spend thousands of dollars working to create quality habitat for a variety of wildlife. Volunteers, as well as trained professionals and private landowners, all work in harmony to turn marginal habitat into productive, quality land that benefits both game and non-game species.

For years, various conservation-oriented groups have been teaming up with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) to create or repair first-rate hunting and fishing spots throughout the state. From national organizations with a hundred thousand or more voices to local fishing and hunting clubs with a handful of dedicated members, these groups fill the void and take up the slack VDGIF simply can't. They have the money, the manpower, or the determination to take on tasks nobody else wants—or can afford—to undertake.

Why join one, or more, of these groups? The reasons are plentiful. Besides giving necessary money to organizations that directly benefit all types of fish and wildlife, members share pride in knowing they are pitching in towards a worthy cause. Let's face it, there's no telling where our duck population would be if it weren't for the millions of dollars spent on nesting habitat restoration by Ducks Unlimited. Who knows how many—or how few—turkeys would be gobbling in the spring woods if it weren't for the large amount of money handed over to VDGIF by the National Wild Turkey Federation.

Members who are active in these organizations also gain new friends with a common interest and learn more about the wildlife they are helping. And sometimes, actively

participating in a habitat restoration project opens the doors to new hunting and fishing opportunities.

Even the members who don't donate their valuable time are giving much-needed resources namely, cash. Without money, these organizations simply couldn't afford the necessary staff or other assets that are vital to the daily operations of a conservation group of any size.

Here's a look at some of the more active organizations in Virginia:

Ducks Unlimited

Nearly 13,000 Virginians belong to Ducks Unlimited (DU), the nation's leading wetlands conservation organization. It's true that the majority of the money raised by DU goes to nesting habitat projects in Canada and the states known as the "duck factory," but a sizable amount stays right here. Wetlands creation or improvement, wood duck nesting boxes, and public education programs all help waterfowl, as well as duck and goose hunters here in Virginia.



©Soc Clay

In fact, in 1996, state DU members raised a whopping \$945,000 dollars toward wetlands habitat preservation. A minimum of 7.5 percent of all money raised in the state stays in Virginia, thanks to DU's Matching Aid to Restore State Habitat (MARSH) program. So far, a total of 43 projects have been completed in Virginia on both public and private land.

David Norris, wetland habitat biologist for VDGIF said one of those projects was the restoration of 30 acres of marsh on the Chester Phelps Wildlife Management Area in Fauquier County.

"Ducks Unlimited provided half the funding for that project," he says. "The project involved building a dike and installing two water control gates. We also planted moist soil vegetation that will benefit ducks as well as non-game species."

According to Norris, that newly constructed marsh will be open by lottery to managed waterfowl hunting this fall.

"DU has helped with projects all over the state," adds Norris. "We restored 10 acres of wetlands habitat on the James River WMA, and DU helped purchase property on what is now part of the Whitehurst Tract and at Hog Island."

Volunteers gladly spend time and money to install wood duck nesting boxes all over the state, even in places they'll never hunt.

"They do it because they love wildlife, not because they want more ducks to shoot," says Biggy Hunt, MARSH chairman for Virginia. "We'll help anybody that wants our help, whether they are hunters or not. That doesn't matter."

Quail Unlimited

Since 1995, says VDGIF small game biologist Mike Fies, Quail Unlimited (QU) has donated about \$13,000 towards the purchase of equipment. At first, much of the money went to a variety of costs that helped kick off one of the Southeast's most intense quail management studies. But now that the research has become more focused, the money is being spent on a few necessary items.

"We've used quite a bit of the money on radio collars for birds so we can track their movements and nesting habits. We didn't know a lot about those things until we were able to fit quail with these collars," he adds. "That was an important purchase."

So far, he and his colleagues have fitted 429 birds with radio transmit-

ters and followed their movements with a receiver that cost about \$2,500. That was also purchased with money from QU.

"It's a win-win situation," says Fies. "The funds are the necessary push to get a study like this going. With such large on-going funding support, VDGIF sees a serious commitment from Quail Unlimited. It really makes our job easier knowing they are willing to help."

Of course, QU isn't just helping Virginians through money donated to VDGIF. Private landowners can reap the rewards of the hard work and money of QU. According to Fies, they donated a warm season grass drill to the Department that is loaned to landowners who request it.



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Izaak Walton League of America (IWLA)

The IWLA's 50,000 members have a wide variety of interests, but all agree that clean air, water and soil are tantamount to an abundance of fish, game and non-game wildlife. The League's motto sums up their mission: "Defenders of woods, air, soil, water and wildlife."

Jim Mosher, conservation director for the IWLA's national office in Gaithersburg, Maryland, says the staff often lobbies both federal and state governments on behalf of natural resources, conservation and environmental issues.

"We also have a very strong grass-roots constituency that is active at the local level," he adds. "The Save Our Streams" (SOS) program helps local chapters, schools and clubs monitor streams and wet-



Dwight Dyke



©David Hart

Outdoor and conservation groups are a great place to learn more about hunting, fishing, boating and other outdoor-related activities. Helping to get kids interested in the outdoors, protecting wildlife, and the environment are key goals for many of these groups.

lands. The information they gather helps highlight problems or successes with the environment in local areas and in some cases, the data collected are used by some state environmental agencies."

The SOS monitoring program is relatively simple, but the data gathered is vital to determining the health of a stream. Volunteers simply collect aquatic life, usually invertebrates, and keep a tally on what they find. Some forms of aquatic life can only live in clean water, so its presence or absence can determine the health of a certain stream or marsh.

The IWLA also offers help to any chapter or member that needs technical assistance on any issue that affects the environment or natural resource.

"We also track regulatory processes and provide updates on issues that affect our members," adds Mosher.

Mike Lane, president of the IWLA's Suffolk-Nansemond Chapter says his group was instrumental in creating the Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. Since it was created, his chapter has acted as a "support group" for the refuge and has donated manpower for a variety of tasks.

"It's a unique resource, so we want to do whatever we can to pre-

serve it," he says. "Right now, we're lobbying to get funding for a visitor's center and for the purchase of additional sensitive land outside the refuge's boundaries."

Trout Unlimited (TU)

You don't have to be a trout angler to appreciate the work that Virginia's TU members have undertaken over the years. Birdwatchers, hikers and even joggers who couldn't tell the difference between a brown and rainbow trout can't help but notice the trash-free stream banks along so many of the state's waters. The Northern Virginia Chapter of TU, along with others throughout the state, holds annual cleanup days on several local streams that receive trout stockings.

Last fall, members, along with local citizens and scout groups, pulled refuse from the delayed harvest section of Accotink Creek, which flows through Fairfax County, one of the most populated areas of the state. If it weren't for the constant hum of a nearby interstate, you'd never know you were in such a heavily-populated area.

Of course, streamside cleanup projects aren't the only things TU

and its members do. Neal Emerald, president of the Northern Virginia Chapter, says they help pay for signs and parking lot improvements, as well. TU also holds fishing and conservation camps in conjunction with 4-H clubs. These camps help teach youngsters about the joys of trout fishing, and the benefits of clean water and a healthy environment.

"We also provide manpower, resources and money for stream bank stabilization projects wherever it's needed," he adds.

On both a state and national level, TU lobbies for legislation that favors coldwater fisheries conservation.

National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf)

Like DU and QU, the NWTf makes sizable contributions toward the efforts of VDGIF personnel.

"In the last 20 years or so, they have given us around \$300,000 for research programs, habitat improvement projects and reward money for our Crime Hotline," says Gary Norman, VDGIF's forest game bird biologist. "That money has been vital to our habitat improvement projects."

The NWTf recommends that the majority of the money be spent on land that is accessible to all Virginians. Norman says it is.

"We've been working on improving early successional habitat on national forest land, Department-owned land and private corporate land that is open to the public on a permit basis. That type of habitat is critical to brood survival and, in much of our wild turkey range, it's the most limiting factor towards brood survival."

Much of the improvements consist of prescribed burning to promote vital undergrowth and seeding and planting to establish perma-

The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries relies heavily on many of these outdoor groups to assist them in various management efforts. Without these volunteers much of the important work done by VDGIF would not be possible.



Dwight Dyke



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nent forage for both young and adult wild turkeys.

He adds that the Virginia chapter of the NWTF, which is made up of about 5,000 members, donated \$10,000 towards the purchase of transmitters and tracking devices so Norman and his colleagues could study turkey movements.

Several thousand dollars has gone directly to the Law Enforcement Division. That money was used to purchase surveillance equipment, provide reward money to informants who turned in poachers and pay for reward signs that are posted at many of Virginia's game check stations.

"Every dollar the National Wild Turkey Federation gives us helps tremendously," says Norman. "That, in turn, helps everyone who cares about wild turkeys and other wildlife."

Ruffed Grouse Society

The Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) may not be the largest conservation organization, but it certainly has a dedicated membership that works diligently to improve grouse and woodcock habitat. The RGS has about 22,000 members nationwide and over 900 members here in Virginia.

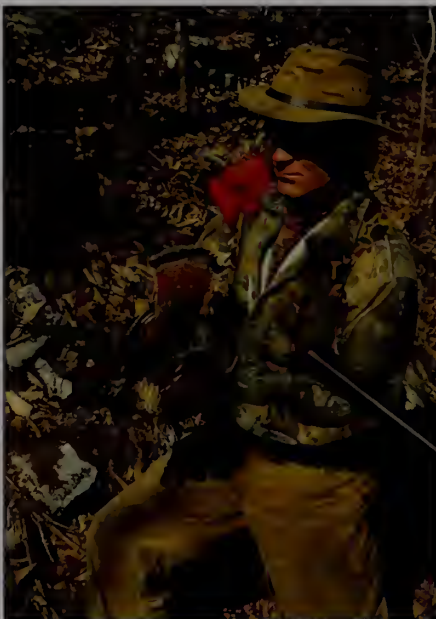
Gary Norman works with the Society on a regular basis and is currently heading the Appalachian Cooperative Grouse Research Project. Five states, including Virginia, West Virginia, Ohio, Maryland and Kentucky, are working together to study population dynamics of ruffed grouse. The RGS has donated \$15,000 towards the project.

"We're looking at the impact of hunting, particularly late season hunting, on grouse populations," says Norman. "We're also looking into the role of predators and we are studying the survival rates of chicks."

Although much of the work is being conducted on national forest lands, the RGS works closely with private and corporate landowners who want to improve wildlife habitat on their land, as well.

According to Ron Burkert, Associate Executive Director for Development for the RGS, the Society has given \$55,000 to the Virginia Tech Cooperative Extension Service since 1991. That money has gone towards private landowner workshops.

"The Extension Service teaches landowners how to manage their lands to benefit all types of wildlife, including forest gamebirds," says Burkert. "Landowners learn how to maximize the potential of their land. They are also instructed how to teach their neighbors what they learn at these workshops. We call it an 'each one teach one' approach."



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Smaller Organizations

It wouldn't be fair to overlook the dozens, perhaps hundreds, of small grassroots organizations that work on behalf of Virginia's fish and wildlife. From local fishing and hunting clubs, to loose-knit groups that are held together by a common belief and that simply want to make a difference, these organizations are constantly working to improve our natural resources.

The 2,300-member Virginia Bass Federation (VBF) sponsors youth fishing days throughout the state. Members of local bass clubs that belong to the Federation donate time and necessary resources to help children discover the joys of fishing.

"Typically, the half-day youth seminars we put on consist of different stations that teach kids about knots, lures, fish identification and boating safety, among other things. We move them through these short classes and then give them a rod and let them try to catch their own fish," says Ed Rhodes, vice-president of the VBF.

They also pitch in to clean up local waters and highways.

"Some of our clubs belong to the Adopt-A-Highway program," adds Rhodes.

The Virginia Deer Hunters Association, a 4,000 member group, has a full-time lobbyist who works for the interests of the state's 200,000 deer hunters.

"We work closely with the Game Department to make sure the state's deer hunters are represented when VDGIF considers new regulations, bag limits and other management decisions," says Executive Director Denny Quaiiff. "We're also very active with the Hunters for the Hungry program."

No matter what your favorite pursuit is, it's important to give something back to the land from which you take. By joining one or more of these groups, you can. □

David Hart is an outdoor writer for various Northern Virginia papers.

Getting in touch

The Izaak Walton League of America - (800) IKE-LINE
Trout Unlimited - (703) 522-0200
Ducks Unlimited - (901) 758-3719
National Wild Turkey Federation - (803) 637-3106
The Ruffed Grouse Society - (412) 262-4044
Quail Unlimited - (803) 637-5731
Virginia Deer Hunters Society - (804) 743-1290
Virginia Bass Federation - (804) 834-8242

New River Float and Fishing Trips



by Paul E. Bugas, Jr., Daniel A. Garren, and Joe Williams

When you plan a trip on the New River in southwest Virginia, you will be floating into the past. The New River is an ancient river system, the oldest on the North American continent and second only to the Nile River in Africa as the oldest river in the world. It begins as two streams in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina, before merging into the New River four miles from the Virginia line. And therein lies another quirk of this ancient river—it flows northward rather than southward like most of the other major rivers along the eastern seaboard. It meanders some 160 miles through the counties of Grayson, Carroll, Pulaski, Montgomery and Giles in Virginia before it turns into Bluestone Lake in West Virginia and emerges later as the Kanawha River at the Gauley Bridge. The New River ends its metamorphosis when it empties into the great Mississippi River.

Throughout its journey in Virginia, the New River flows through spectacular, untamed mountain scenery complete with craggy rock cliffs and magnificent gorges. Thus, the New River provides plenty of excitement for whitewater enthusiasts, with several major Class II-III rapids. There is also an abundance of flatwater to please motorboaters and canoeists.

Fishing is not to be missed in the New River. Simply stated, the New rivals the James and Rappahannock rivers as one of the best fishing rivers in Virginia. It supports outstanding populations of just about every major freshwater game fish in the state: smallmouth bass, spotted bass, largemouth bass, rock bass, striped bass, white bass, hybrid striped bass, muskellunge, walleye, black crappie, channel catfish, flathead catfish, yellow perch, redbreast sunfish, and bluegill. State records that have been caught in the New

River include muskellunge (45 lbs.), smallmouth bass (7 lbs. 7 oz.), yellow perch (2 lbs. 2 oz.), and walleye (14 lbs. 6 oz.). The state record spotted bass came out of Claytor Lake in 1993 at 3 lbs. 10 oz. And the river has the potential to yield many more record-setting catches in the future.

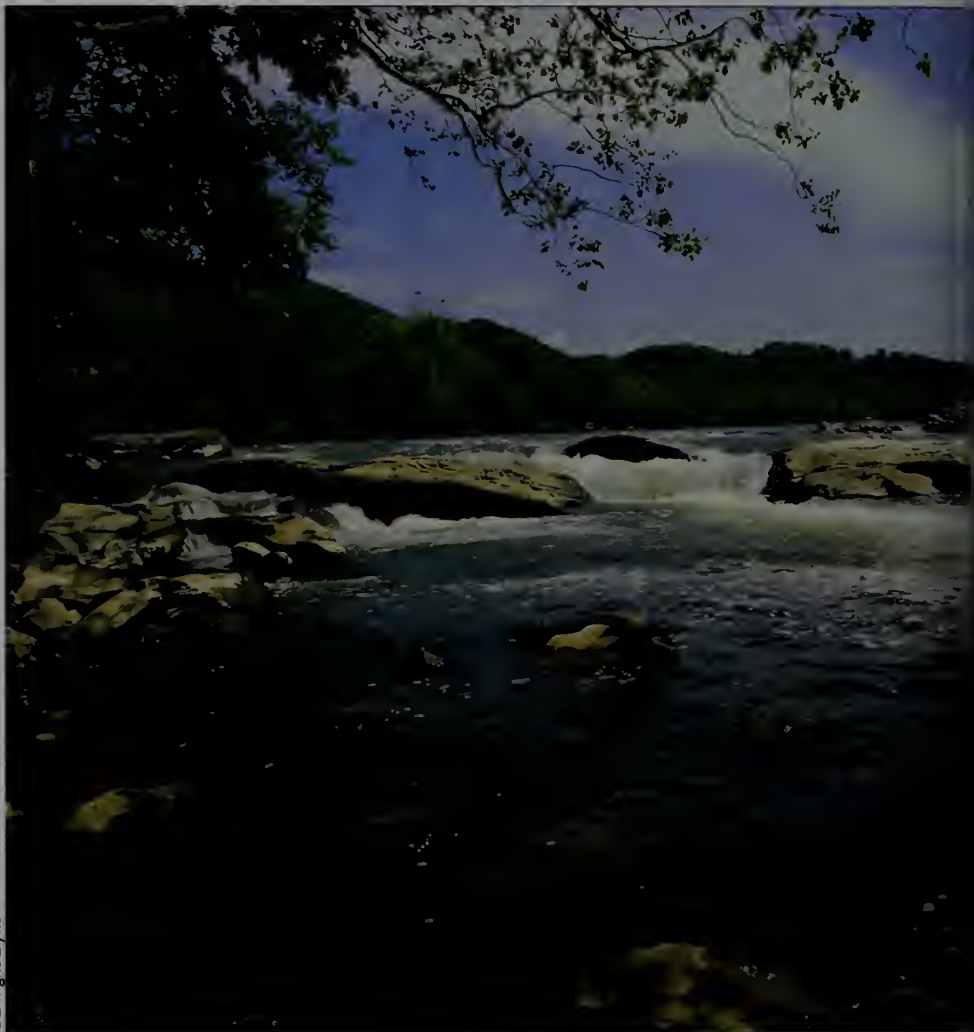
Fast water and big rock outcroppings are a feature of the New River, spelling perfect habitat for big smallmouth bass and flathead catfish. You can pull your canoe up on an island and fish with jigs or spinnerbaits to hook some fine trophies.

But that doesn't mean the New is all fast water. Several lazy, slow stretches abound, where you can soak in the spectacular scenery of rock cliffs, old Indian settlements and tobacco farms, and still have luck fishing for rock bass near grass beds. The slow waters near the dams along the river will yield big flat-

head and channel catfish as well as walleye and smallmouth bass when fished with jigs or live bait.

Outdoor recreational activities abound along the river. New River Trail State Park parallels the river for over 50 miles from Pulaski to Fries or Galax. It is a beautiful tract of land that allows hikers, horseback riders and bicyclists to take in the beauty of the river as it sweeps through southwestern Virginia. Plus, a trip to the historical Shot Tower State Park near Jackson Ferry is a must. The 4,500-acre Claytor Lake in Pulaski County was created out of the river in 1939 by a hydroelectric dam, and is now a well-used recreational spot. The 400+ acre Claytor State Park adjoins the lake, providing campgrounds, cottages, a marina, and hiking trails for visitors.

Outfitters can be found all along the New River, so a quick call to a



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local chamber of commerce will put you in touch with an experienced guide who will eliminate much of the worry about planning a float trip along this historic Virginia waterway.

Float Trips

Five dams impede the free-flowing New River in Virginia: Fields Dam, Fries Dam, Byllesby Dam, Buck Dam, and Claytor Dam. But many of these can be portaged, and often provide some good flatwater fishing. Thanks to a new program, Partners in Rivers, portage access around Byllesby and Buck Dams is now available. Be warned that large volumes of water are frequently released from these dams to generate electricity, so be ready to move ashore if you notice a sudden rise in the river.

Plan on floating one hour per mile under normal conditions, especially if you plan to fish.

NOTE: Approximately half of the access points noted on the map are developed public areas. The remainder are traditionally used sites that can accommodate a canoe or light johnboat and are designated on the map and on the float trips by a letter. Please respect all property by refraining from littering, blocking gates or access roads, and from camping in prohibited areas.

Mouth of Wilson to Bridle Creek

Distance: 6 miles

Put in on the west bank of the river near the intersection of Routes 93 and 58. Cartop launch only. A one-mile backwater from Fields Dam, an old woolen mill, immediately greets the boater after launching. This slow water yields good catches of smallmouth bass and muskellunge. Portage the dam on the left side before continuing your journey to Bridle Creek. With the entry of Fox Creek just below the dam, an occasional trophy brown or rainbow trout can be hooked. Easy riffles and scenic countryside can be experienced on this float. Take out

on the left bank prior to the Route 601 crossing at Bridle Creek.

Bridle Creek to Independence

Distance: 10 miles

This is the float for whitewater enthusiasts. Put in at Bridle Creek landing off Route 601 about 1.5 miles south of Bridle Creek community. The river spills over four sets of ledges to create some Class II and III rapids. For those who prefer to bypass such action, Penitentiary Shoals should be portaged on the left and Big Island Falls (near the North Carolina line) can be portaged from the right side. Fast water and big rock outcroppings always spell big smallmouth bass and flathead catfish. Take the opportunity to pull your craft up on a cobble bar or an island and fish with jigs or spinnerbaits around the ample structure. Exit the river on the left side just beyond the Route 21 bridge.

Independence to Baywood

Distance: 12 miles

This is a trip for those in love with flat water and gorgeous scenery. Put in about three miles south of the town of Independence off Route 21.

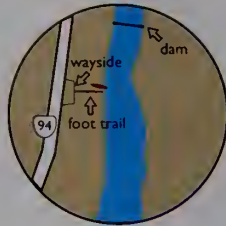
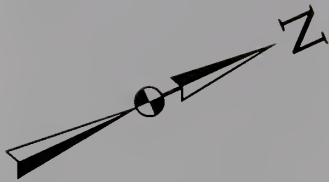
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Before taking to the water it's always important that you have all the necessary safety equipment and that you check ahead of time to make sure that water levels are safe for boating.

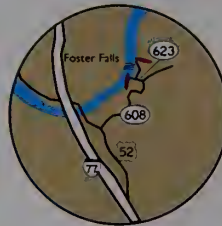
Floating the New River



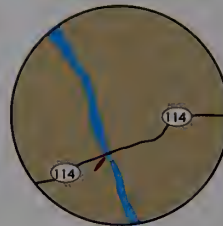
A
FRIES DAM
VERY STEEP
(INFORMAL CARTOP)



B
FOWLER'S FERRY
(INFORMAL CARTOP)



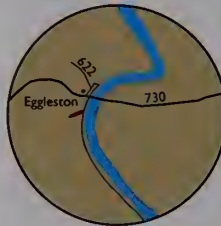
C
JACKSON FERRY
(INFORMAL CARTOP)



D
PEPPERS FERRY
(INFORMAL CARTOP)



E
BIG FALLS
(INFORMAL CARTOP)



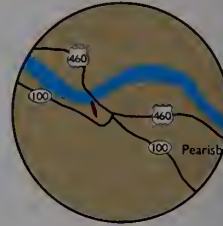
F
EGGLESTON
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RAMP PLANNED
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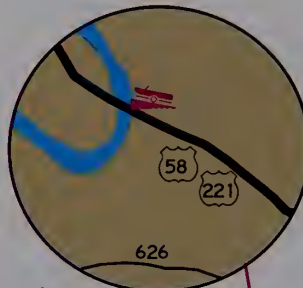
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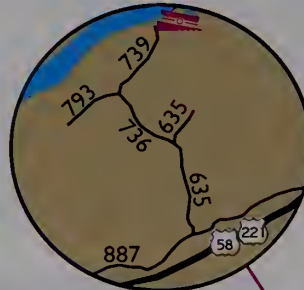
BRIDLE CREEK
LANDING



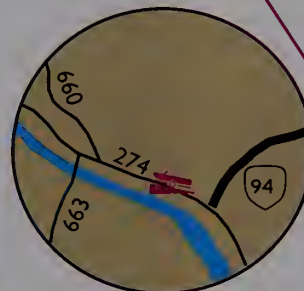
INDEPENDENCE
LANDING



BAYWOOD
LANDING



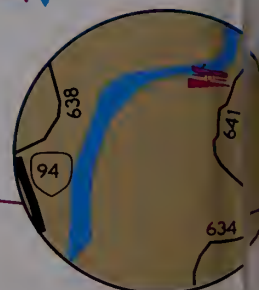
BYLLESBY RESERVOIR
LANDING



RIVERSIDE
LANDING



FRIES LANDING



OLDTOWN LANDING



Be sure you get an early start or you will be doing more paddling than fishing. Short easy riffles and a few sharp ledges characterize all the fast water you will experience. Try casting into the numerous pockets for lively spotted bass action and near the grass beds for rock bass. Takeout is on the right side of the river just under the Route 58 bridge.

Baywood to Riverside

Distance: 8.5 miles

Another quiet float for the most part, Baywood can be reached from either Galax or Independence via Route 58. Here, the New River winds around old Indian settlements and tobacco farms. Around two miles above the take out, you will encounter Joyce's Rapids, challenging your boating skills and providing some outstanding smallmouth bass opportunities. Be sure to fish the cool waters of Elk Creek where it joins the river directly above the take out. For those who opt for a longer float, there are camping facilities available in the vicinity of Riverside. Take out on the left near the intersection of Routes 274 and 94.

Riverside to Oldtown

Distance: 6 miles

A wide channel, big islands, and grassy backwaters typify this stretch. Be sure to probe around the islands for muskellunge, smallmouth bass, and flathead catfish. Your trip can be cut in half by taking out at a popular cartop spot on the south side of the Route 94 bridge. Check out the local guide service for camping and boating opportunities. The Oldtown take out is on the right bank two miles past the Route 94 bridge.

Oldtown to Fries Dam (A)

Distance: 2.5 miles

This is a short trip to take advantage of the power pool above Fries Dam, a 40-foot rock structure that once powered a thriving textile mill. The power pool harbors largemouth bass, bluegill, black crappie, yellow perch, and an occasional muskellunge. Be sure to look for signs of

blue barrels strung across the river to warn boaters of the impending danger from the dam. Portage the dam on the left bank, following a very steep foot trail up to a public wayside off Route 94.

Fries to Byllesby Reservoir

Distance: 7 miles

Launch at the VDGIF boat landing on river left off Rt. 94 at Riverside Park in the town of Fries. A broad river channel and loads of ledges and rock structure greet the boater. If you can pick your way up to Fries Dam one-half mile upstream, sharp rock ledges and deep currents produce trophy smallmouth bass and channel catfish all the way to the slow waters of Byllesby Dam just below the confluence of Chestnut Creek. These waters can be jigged or live bait fished for big flatheads and channel catfish, as well as walleye and smallmouth bass. Take out about one mile above Byllesby Dam at a ramp at the end of Route 739 near Riverhill.

Fowler's Ferry (B)

Distance: 2.5 miles

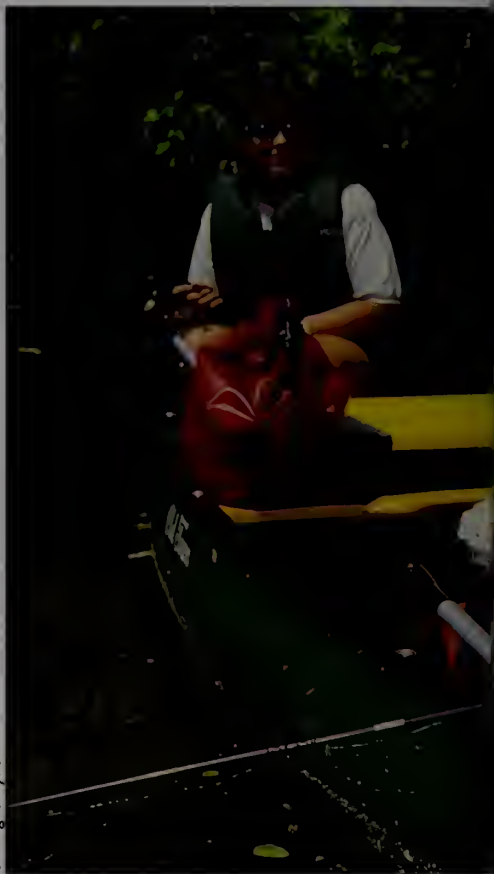
This is a short piece of water sandwiched in between Buck and Byllesby dams. Put in off Route 635 on right side of river at an informal cartop launch. Beautiful bluffs, scattered islands, and rock ledges characterize this area. Nice stringers of channel catfish can be taken near the base of Byllesby Dam, while smallmouth bass, spotted bass, and walleye also abound throughout the entire reach. Plan to paddle back to Fowler's Ferry or prepare for a long, left bank portage around Buck Dam.

Fowler's Ferry (B) to Austinville

Distance: 7.5 miles

After working your way around Buck Dam, prepare for a scenic float through a bit of history. The area around Ivanhoe and Austinville were extensively mined for lead into the 1800s. Today, the landscape is dotted with cabbage farms, small towns, and towering cliffs. For the boater, easy water lies ahead along with terrific fishing. Walleye make

their way all the way to the foot of Buck Dam and the last two state record walleye (both over 14 lbs.!) were caught in this stretch. The deep pools of this reach yield trophy catfish and muskellunge as well. Trout are caught occasionally near the mouth of Cripple Creek, a premier trout stream that enters the river here. Take out is a ramp near the Route 636 bridge at Austinville. A



new ramp is planned for Ivanhoe off Route 94 at Jubilee Park.

Austinville to Jackson Ferry (C)

Distance: 3.5 miles

This is a short but scenic float. Put in river right off Route 636 at a new, state-of-the-art boat ramp. New River Trail State Park hugs the river here. A deep, slow pool of water under the old steel bridge is sure to harbor lunker muskellunge and channel catfish. Take out at New River Trail State Park, Foster Falls Village either above Foster Falls, a Class III-IV rapid, or below it. Be sure to visit the historical Shot Tower

State Park before leaving the vicinity of Jackson Ferry.

Jackson Ferry (C) to Allisonia

Distance: 13.5 miles

For those with a love of whitewater, you can put in above Foster Falls, a Class III-IV rapid, at one of the two new ramps constructed in New River Trail State Park, Foster Falls Village. For the more faint of heart,

advantage of the cool water being supplied by Big Reed Island Creek, just above the landing. A nice, 10-car parking area and concrete ramp is available at Allisonia off Route 693 for those who prefer to do a little outboard motoring.

Claytor Lake

21 miles in length

Claytor Lake is a 4,500-acre hy-

below the rocky cliffs of the lake. Walleye run up the river as early as February and white bass make their annual spawning runs in April and May. Boats with outboard motors are recommended to navigate the waters of the lake.

Claytor Dam to Peppers Ferry (D)

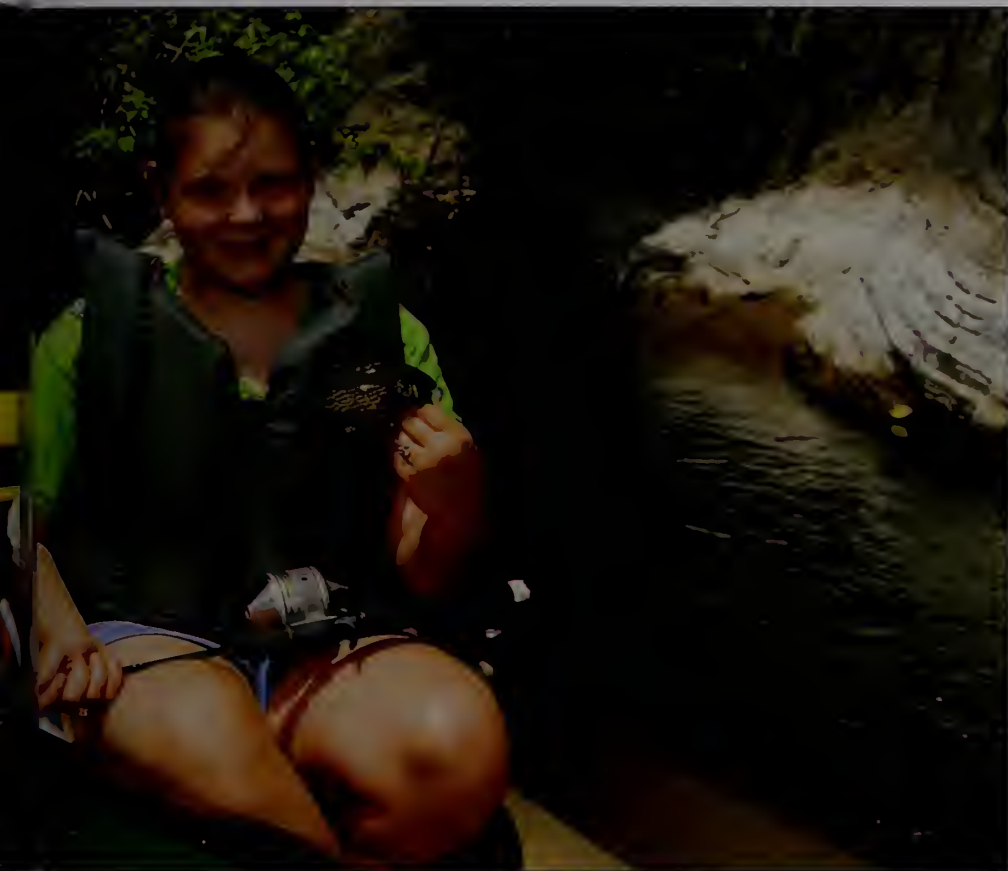
Distance: 11 miles

Launch on the east bank off Route 605 after passing under I-81. Maneuver up to Claytor Dam to take advantage of some great smallmouth bass, spotted bass, and flathead catfish angling. Muskellunge are stocked from Claytor Dam to the West Virginia line. Be sure to fish the mouth of Little River as it enters New River directly below the dam. Water conditions from this landing to the West Virginia line can change rapidly (2-3 foot rise in a short period of time) when power is being generated at the dam. Be sure not to camp too close to the shore or get caught wading in mid-river when APCO is releasing water. This is a relatively mild float with no major rapids and modest scenery. Exit the river on the left just above the Route 114 bridge at Peppers Ferry. Or, you can cut the trip in half by taking out or launching at a ramp near the Demon Sports Complex of Radford University.

Peppers Ferry (D) to Whitethorne

Distance: 8.5 miles

Informal put in on river left at the Route 114 bridge. The river slowly winds around tall cliffs, residential development, and the Radford Army Ammunition Plant. Scattered ledges and easy riffles characterize much of this float. Boaters beware of a Class II drop known as Arsenal Rapids. This rapid should be scouted and portaged on the right bank. Excellent smallmouth bass fishing can be found from the falls to Whitethorne, along with the usual river fish assemblage, including a few largemouth bass, black crappie, and channel catfish that have made their way out of Claytor Lake. Take out is at Whitethorne, a developed



Known for its great fishing, the New River is loaded with a variety of fish species. Even small fish like this scrappy rock bass can create an enjoyable time, putting smiles on faces and warming the hearts of anglers.

put in about 300 yards downstream below Foster Falls at the second ramp in the park. The Foster Falls area contains numerous rock gardens and sharp ledges—home to big smallmouth and spotted bass. Downstream, beach your canoe on one of the many islands and fish the deep runs for walleye, white bass, and catfish. Closer to Allisonia, the river begins to slow as you enter the deep waters of Claytor Lake. Take

droelectric facility built in 1939 by Appalachian Power Company. Two major boat landings, one owned by VDGIF and one by Claytor Lake State Park are located close to Claytor Dam on the north side of the lake. Three other private ramps also give access to Claytor Lake. The 472-acre Claytor Lake State Park has four campgrounds, cottages, a marina, and hiking trails. Claytor Lake has an array of game fish species to satisfy the needs of any freshwater angler. Striped bass, hybrid stripers, white bass, walleye, smallmouth bass, spotted bass, largemouth bass, black crappie, yellow perch, channel catfish, and a variety of sunfish lurk

VDGIF boat landing off Route 623 on the right side of the river.

Whitethorne to Big Falls (E)

Distance: 7 miles

Put in at the end of Route 623 at Whitethorne. This section is punctuated by several small ledges and riffles. Smallmouth action in this reach is nothing short of fabulous! It is not uncommon to hook several fish in the 2-4 lb. class while using hellgrammites, jigs, or crayfish imitations. This is also one of the best areas on the lower New River to tangle with trophy muskellunge. As soon as the river leaves Montgomery County and flows into Giles County (approximately 5 miles), it roars over a two-foot ledge known as Big Falls. Take out along Route 625 above or below the falls. This is a Class II-III run depending on water conditions. It is also a popular tubing and swimming spot for students from VA Tech and Radford University, so expect a lot of activity in the river during the warm months.

Big Falls (E) to Eggleston (F)

Distance: 2.5 miles

This beautiful reach is typified by towering cliffs, deep pools, and a few challenging riffles. One difficult rock ledge is located on the right side of an island one mile above the Eggleston bridge. Anglers can expect to catch big muskellunge in this section. Some of the largest catches of this fish have come from the area between Whitethorne and Eggleston. Be sure to cast large plugs or use adult chubs to increase your chances of landing a trophy musky. Smallmouth bass fishing is outstanding as well. Take out on left bank just before the Eggleston bridge (Route 730) along Rt. 622.

Eggleston (F) to Pembroke (G)

Distance: 6 miles

This is a short but beautiful float. Towering palisades line the water's edge as the boater drifts slowly through the bends in the river. Short riffle areas are interspersed through this reach, inviting the angler to beach his craft and try flycasting a wooly bugger in the swirling pock-

ets and runs. Take out off Route 623, on the right side above the bridge.

Pembroke (G) to Ripplemead (H)

Distance: 2 miles

The outstanding scenery continues through this short piece of the river. Walker Creek, a notable tributary, enters the river about halfway through the trip. Several small islands dot the channel, offering a good opportunity to stretch and fish for rock bass and smallmouth bass in and around the channels. Fishing below the many small ledges can be productive as well. Take out off Route 636 on the left bank, just under the Route 460 bridge.

Ripplemead (H) to Bluff City (I)

Distance: 7.5 miles

Be on your toes for some white-water action after entering the river at Ripplemead. A Class II rapid awaits approximately one mile from the put in, followed by several more ledges that produce great canoeing fun. A long series of Class II riffles and ledges are located a mile below the confluence of Big Stony Creek. Clendennin Shoals, located near the

town of Pearisburg, is the strongest rapid in this float and provides some excellent opportunities to land a big smallmouth bass or monster flat-head catfish. Bragging-size muskellunge can also be caught in the deep holes. Take out on the left side of the river below the Route 460 bridge near Bluff City. A formal ramp is planned at this site.

Bluff City (I) to Rich Creek

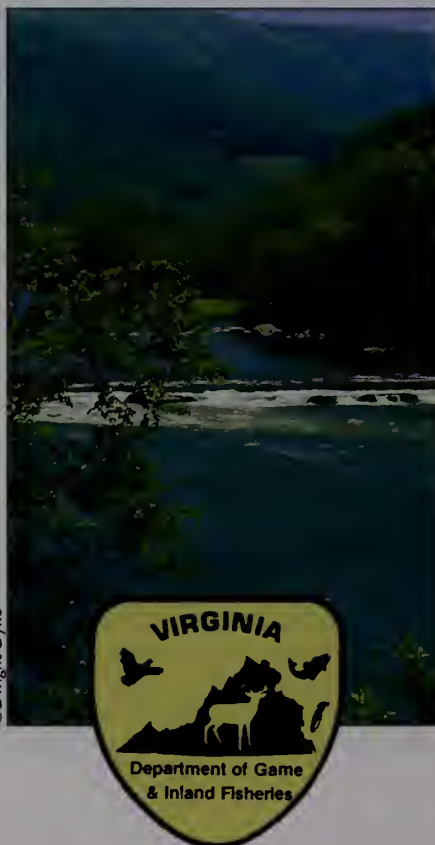
Distance: 5.5 miles

Flat water dominates this run. Several small ledges and rock gardens can be handled easily, but beware of Narrows Falls, located below the town of Narrows. This is a Class III rapid that should be scouted thoroughly before attempting to run it. Narrows Falls drops around 7 feet in 50 feet of river. An old, crumbled dam at the end of the run forms several hydraulics that can be lethal to unsuspecting boaters. Fish the confluence of Wolf Creek at Narrows for smallmouth bass, rock bass, muskellunge, and catfish. Take out at the VDGIF landing on the right bank just below Narrows Falls. A new informal take out is planned at the mouth of Wolf Creek, just above the falls. It will be part of a planned park being constructed by the town.

Rich Creek to Glen Lyn

5 miles

This is a gentle float, interrupted by a few short riffles and several large islands. The VDGIF Glen Lyn landing is located at a beautiful small park on the right-hand side, just above the Route 460 bridge. Take the kids on this short float and introduce them to the joys of float fishing. Catches of smallmouth bass, redbreast sunfish, and rock bass can be expected in this reach of the river. Around seven miles of the river flow through Virginia before leaving the state at this point, but finding a take out can be difficult. Paddling the slow waters of Bluestone Lake when it is at full pond is not desirable either, so many boaters consider Glen Lyn to be the final stop on the scenic New River in Virginia. □



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When you have the right combination of rod, reel, line and lures fly fishing for smallmouth bass can be very rewarding.

Fly Fishing for Smallmouth Bass

by Harry Murray

Want to know what kind of fly rod you need, or what flies will work best? Then here's your guide to a style of fishing that might hook you for life.

Fly fishing for smallmouth bass in streams is one of the finest forms of angling to be found, and the Old Dominion has a wonderful abundance of it. This type of fishing has many features which attract sportsmen with a variety of goals, and few are ever disappointed.

I believe much of its appeal rests in the fact that it is easy to learn, very productive, a great amount of fun, and a logical cornerstone upon which one can build future fly fishing goals.



Tackle

In order to take advantage of this fine sport let's examine the tackle, the tactics and some of the areas where one can expect to find good smallmouth fishing.

The fly rod is an important part of our tackle and must be powerful enough to handle the size 4 bugs and flies we frequently use. However, many anglers find that a fly rod with an extremely stiff butt section is very tiring when making the repeated casts we make in bass fishing.

My personal preference in a fly rod for smallmouth fishing, as well as those of my guides and the hundreds of students in my schools, is a nine foot rod with a very strong tip and a moderately flexible butt section that balances with a number 7 line.

Fly reels for bass fishing must be large enough to hold a number 7 line with 100 feet of dacron backing. Since our leaders are not really delicate and the bass seldom make powerful runs, we do not need an elaborate drag system. The quality of the construction and the tolerances throughout the reel are more important to the bass fisherman than an elaborate drag.

The basic fly line for this rod would be a weight forward, seven floating bass bug taper (WF-7-F BBT). This will cover the majority of our needs for fishing both topwater and underwater flies. A word of caution: good fly lines are expensive, and basic care will both prolong the life and performance of your line.

I recommend that after every six outings the line be washed with a mild soap (such as Ivory), rinsed, dried and dressed with a modern dressing (such as Glide), then polished with a soft cloth or paper towel. The whole procedure takes



©Dwight Dyke

One of the most popular ways to fly fish for smallmouth bass is with surface poppers or hair bugs. The secrets to enticing big fish are in the way an angler manipulates the fly producing a variety of actions.

less than ten minutes, but it can double the life of your line and add greatly to the day to day performance of your line.

A moderately fast sinking tip fly line can expand the smallmouth anglers possibilities. I frequently rely on these lines early in the season when our streams are high and late in the season when the water temperatures drop, both of which cases dictate that our best action will come from fishing our flies deeply.

The smallmouth angler's leader is an extremely important part of his

arsenal, for the proper one will effectively perform three important functions and thus should be carefully selected. First, it must provide a smooth, accurate presentation with our bully flies. Second, it must allow us to manipulate our flies in a realistic manner in order to attract the bass. Third, it, along with its attached indicators, is our major aid in detecting the bass' strike.

The Knotted Bright Butt Leader, (which is nine feet long,) containing five feet of fluorescent mono in the butt with three Scientific Anglers'

indicators spaced along its length, achieves these three criteria perfectly. The tippet of this leader is 2X for the majority of our fishing, but I do taper down to 3X as our streams get low and clear late in the season.

After these four items of tackle are selected the smallmouth angler can round out his needs from conventional tackle, for there is much overlap from here on.

Methods

There are three basic methods one may use for smallmouth fishing and although there is nothing radically different than similar tactics used for other fish, there are some refinements we make for our bass which improve our catch both in quality and quantity. After you gain an understanding of these three basic methods, the specific tactics you use may



Surface bugs like the Shenandoah Darter are excellent for creating an erratic minnow-like action, which smallmouth bass find irresistible and love to feed on. Photos ©Dwight Dyke.

be determined by your particular whims, or the dictates of the bass. Or you may simply use these as a starting point to develop more involved or specialized techniques.

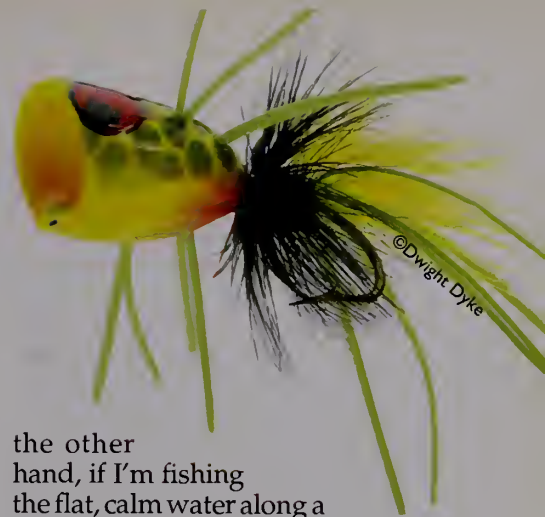
Frequently I get anglers in my fly fishing schools who want to learn how to take bass only on surface bugs and flies. Apparently they feel that watching the play of a bug on the surface and then seeing the bass strike it offers more enjoyment than other methods of fishing for them. Actually, if they are just beginning in bass fly rodding, the top water game is a good choice for another important reason which they may not realize. That is, many anglers learn surface fishing tactics quicker than other methods.

Another factor in favor of surface bugs is the size fish they attract. Every year I take some of my largest bass on them. I can only speculate as to why some of our largest bass will strike, what appears to us, an almost insignificant food morsel wiggling along the surface. I firmly believe the bass perceive our surface bug as something to eat that is much larger than it actually is. As we pop them, wiggle them and slide them across the surface the bass apparently do not want to miss out on an easy meal right there within easy reach.

Fly rod surface lures can be divided into three basic categories: hard head bugs, hair bugs, and dry flies.

The hard head bugs are frequently referred to as poppers, sliders, darters, or chuggers and are usually constructed of cork, foam or balsa wood. These are the most popular fly rod surface lures, and as their specific names imply they are capable of a variety of actions. I like to carry several of each of the four styles and experiment back and forth to find the most productive one for the area I'm fishing.

For example, if I find myself in the section of a river where the riffle flattens out into the pool, I like to use the Darter since I can easily impart an erratic side to side wiggling action to it which effectively mimics the action of the minnows found here. On



the other hand, if I'm fishing the flat, calm water along a shaded bank where the water is only two to three feet deep I'd prefer to use a bug such as the Shenandoah Slider which I can gently tease across the surface in a seductive manner in hopes that I can entice a bass that can thoroughly scrutinize my bug.

I firmly believe that the way we manipulate our bugs in different types of water will greatly influence our success. The different style hard bugs are simply capable of producing a variety of actions.

The hair bugs have long been important to the bass angler. These are constructed of the hollow body hair of large animals such as deer, elk, moose and caribou and thus float on the surface of the water.

There are definitely times that I can take bass on hair bugs when I can't seem to do well with other surface bugs. One important factor in favor of the hair bugs is their soft texture. A bass striking one of these bugs may perceive it as a natural food and thus hold onto it a little longer thereby giving me time to set the hook. Also, an often expressed view is, "Oh, after I took the first two or three bass on that hair bug they all seemed to want it, and then I got a strike on almost every cast." Actually, the bass were seeing a slightly different silhouette and action after those first few were landed, and apparently this was the preferred bill of fare for the day. What happens after our hair bug has caught a few fish, been slobbered on and submerged, is that it rides lower in the water thus presenting a different "look" to the fish. Also, now when we impart action to the bug it seems to flounder around in the surface

rather than riding gracefully upon it. For whatever reason, once you've taken several bass on your hair bug stick with it for a while and you may find you are on the roll of a lifetime.

With both the hard head bugs and the hair bugs I find that sizes 4, 6, and 8 cover all of my bass needs.

The last smallmouth topwater lure we will consider is the dry fly.

We normally consider using dry flies for smallmouth bass when we see them feeding on the adult forms of aquatic insects. In most smallmouth streams in Virginia the main adult aquatic insects which attract the bass are caddisflies, mayflies, damselflies and dragonflies.

Many anglers get excellent action with dry flies from bass with very little knowledge of entomology. They simply match the general color and size of the natural insects they see riding upon the surface that the bass are taking. The bass apparently could care less that the angler cannot identify that little white mayfly they are feeding upon down to the species level, let alone the fact that he does not know the Latin name for it. If your little white fly is at all close in appearance and action to what he's feeding upon you are in for some wonderful action.

Now, personally, I enjoy the entomology that goes along with fly fishing and find myself getting deeper and deeper involved in it. However, the implication that a great knowledge of this is imperative for one to be successful and have a ball at this game is unfair and inaccurate.

A variety of dry flies in sizes 14 up to 8 in cream, olive, brown and gray will take lots of smallmouths.

Streamer fishing for smallmouth bass is extremely effective and almost as easy to learn as topwater fishing. I used to start my Boy Scouts off in this way and in a very short time they were catching fish after fish; they were highly motivated by this taste of success, and I could easily slip a few subtle refinements into their techniques, bringing them along quickly.

Streamers are minnow imitations and with a little insight into which minnows live in various parts of our

streams, the flies that match them and the general techniques required, one can easily become very proficient with this approach.

One of the easiest and most productive streamer techniques is to start right where a riffle dumps into a pool and work downstream. These areas are loaded with chub minnows and the best imitation of this I've ever found is Shenk's White Streamer. Casting down and across stream and retrieving the streamer with a very slow line hand stripping action will give you many nice bass. If the stream is less than a hundred feet wide many anglers like to work their way gradually downstream with this down and across streamer tactic. If, however, the river is several hundred feet wide some anglers like to work back and forth across the river with this same streamer ploy.

Sculpin minnows abound in great numbers among the cobblestone bottoms of the deep runs and strong riffles of our streams and are a staple in the smallmouth's diet.

The Black Strymph and Shenk's Sculpin mimic these minnows well and the same down and across technique used on the chubs works well here. However, since these currents are stronger one needs to evaluate these flows more precisely in order to swim the flies along the stream bottom. Casting across very fast currents in order to run your fly in slightly slower pockets will rob you of the depth needed. A better ploy is to move a little closer to your anticipated feeding areas so those racing currents will not get a chance to interfere with your streamer ploy.

Split shot, weighted flies and the miniature lead heads (described in my book *Fly Fishing For Smallmouth Bass*) all help in getting our flies down deeply. Also, if I'm fishing a long section of the river, which is composed of these heavy runs, I'll frequently use a moderately fast sinking tip fly line. These lines are constructed so the first 13 feet sinks quickly while the rest of the line floats. These are perfect for bass streamer fishing when extra depth is needed for the fishing technique is the same as with a floating line. Our

flies are just swimming deeper. The floating portion of the line lets us easily mend and manipulate it in the manner we desire to get our flies where we want them and it aids greatly in strike detection. Years ago I experimented with full length sinking lines for smallmouth fishing and quickly realized these were overkill. Attempts at manipulating the streamers were frustrating and strike detecting was exasperating. I quickly discovered that anything I could do with a full sinking line I could do better and easier with a fast sinking tip line.

I find that I get my best results by using leaders six feet long with these sinking tip lines. Longer leaders



©Dwight Dyke

negate the value of these lines.

The aquatic grass beds which form in our rivers by mid-summer are the homes of great concentrations of shiner minnows. Bass feed in these areas in two different ways. If the grass beds have open pockets and channels through them the bass frequently cruise about and grab shiners wherever they find them. If, however, the grass beds are fairly dense the bass feed by cruising the edges and slipping into the numerous small bays as they go.

I'm quite fond of grassbeds and can never seem to pass one up, even

if I have to wade all the way across the river I'm fishing to get to one. This allegiance is well justified, for the grassbeds seldom let me down. Also, I frequently find the bass here are a little larger than the average size. It is not at all unlikely to find Bubba in there chasing shiners in all directions as he cruises about getting an easy meal.

My favorite shiner streamer is the Silver Outcast in both sizes 4 and 6.

An effective technique for fishing grass beds is to wade parallel to them a comfortable casting distance out and cast the Silver Outcast tight against the grass and strip it out very slowly. The hot spot is right against the grass so be ready for a



When fish are holding deep in the heat of the day a good selection of streamers, nymphs, and minnow imitations will increase your odds of finding big smallmouth bass. (Left to right) Damselfly Nymph, Dragonfly Nymph, Silver Outcast, Murray's Black Strymph, and Murray's Hellgrammite Nymph.

strike the instant your fly touches the water. Since bass here are feeding right where the grass traces its edge along the main part of the river, I find that I get my best results by stripping the streamer out only about 10 feet then pick it up and cast it back in against the grass several

feet below the previous target.

If I spot pockets of open water back in the grassbeds I like to shoot a cast or two there, for these little protected bays frequently hold large bass in the shade of the grass.

If you are fortunate enough to spot a bass chasing shiners along these grassbeds get your fly out in front of him as quickly as possible. Impart a vigorous stripping action in order to attract his attention. If you spot a chase, but you are out of casting distance, don't race to it because your rapid approach may spook the largest bass you will get a shot at all summer. Rather, mark the area of the chase very carefully and when you get there methodically search out the cover with your streamer.

Smallmouths feed heavily upon "nymphs." This is a general all-encompassing term anglers apply to the underwater forms of aquatic insects. These include mayflies, stoneflies, caddisflies, damselflies, dragonflies and dobsonflies.

Since the degree to which smallmouths will feed on underwater insects is governed by their density and size of the food, let's look at the largest food source in our streams.

The hellgrammite, which is actually the larva of the dobsonfly, reaches four inches long and is present in numbers few anglers would believe unless they seined the riffles.

Many of the students in my fly fishing schools catch so many fish on the Murray's Hellgrammite below these riffles that I have trouble getting them to use any other fly.

An effective technique goes like this. Standing right where the riffles break into the pools I cast down and across stream and allow the hellgrammite to sink to the bottom, then I begin a very slow line hand stripping action that crawls the fly along the stones on the bottom of the river. How slow? If you are in doubt slow down. This invariably gives me more fish. One word of caution concerning this technique; it is imperative that one maintain a tight line from the line hand all the way down to the fly so the strike can be felt the moment the bass picks up the hell-

grammite. Then, sock it to him firmly with both the rod and the line hand.

If the pockets and runs through and below a riffle are quite fast and more than three feet deep, I often turn and cast my hellgrammite up or up and across stream so it has a better chance to sink to the bottom. By keeping the cast in the 20 foot range and watching the three Scientific Anglers' indicators described earlier, I can usually see the bass' take and instantly set the hook.

Other nymphs can also be fished in this manner. You may want to experiment in various parts of the rivers with all of these nymphs in order to find productive combinations. For example, seeing hordes of damselflies resting on the aquatic grassbeds would suggest a damselfly nymph played here could be worthwhile. Or watching the dragonflies hovering over the large pools may cue you to dredge these depths with dragonfly nymphs. I find that nymphs in sizes 4, 6, and 8 cover most of my needs.

As you can see, there are a variety of ways one can fly fish for smallmouth bass. By choosing the ones that suit you best and plying these to your favorite waters, I'm sure you'll have a great amount of fun this summer.

Virginia is blessed with an abundance of fine smallmouth streams. These include the Shenandoah River, the North Fork of the Shenandoah River and its feeder, Big Stony Creek, the South Fork of the Shenandoah River and its feeder, the North, South, and Middle Rivers, the Potomac River, the New River, the James River and its feeder the Tye River. There are many other fine smallmouth streams, but these will get you started.

A book of maps showing all of the smallmouth streams in Virginia along with their access points for both wading and floating is available from the Shenandoah Publishing Co., P.O. Box 156, Edinburg VA 22824 for \$14.95 plus \$3.00 shipping.

Harry Murray is a freelance writer who teaches fishing and fly tying in Edinburg,



In Pursuit

*Learn what it takes
to attract and
feed these nectar
nipping creatures.*

by Emily M. Grey
Photos by Dwight Dyke

Last July 19th, this writer joined 11 other participants in the Sixth Annual Dismal Swamp, Virginia, Fourth of July Butterfly Count. We divided into teams and covered over 75 miles of the Great Dismal Swamp (GDS). This activity resembles the National Audubon Christmas Bird Count with the exception of beginning at 8:30 A.M. and stopping mid-afternoon. Despite grueling heat and humidity, it was a delightful day. The total recorded participants, party hours, miles, species and individuals surpassed other years.

We computed a record 38 species and 758 individual butterflies, 100 percent more than last year's total. The party covering the Williamson, East and Camp Ditches spotted the first ever Southern Skipperling (*Copaodes minimus*).

Some of us added a rare striped and a great purple hairstreak to our life lists. Other indigenous creatures of the swamp, such as black bears, chipmunks, white-tailed deer, raccoons, frogs, turtles, handsome red-bellied black snakes and numerous birds appeared.

Attracting Butterflies

There are approximately 97 butterfly species found at GDS and 157 different kinds in Virginia. Anyone can attract Lepidoptera to their yards. A mere flower pot or hanging basket of impatiens, petunias or other showy plant will suffice. On a grander scale, one can landscape various-sized plots or patches.

To establish a butterfly meadow, allow grasses and wildflowers to dominate part of your yard. Excellent nectar flowers are dandelion,

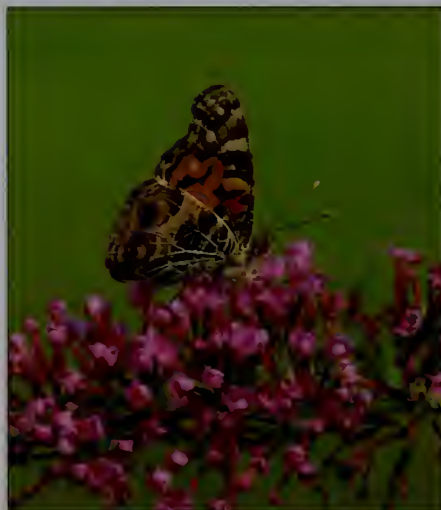
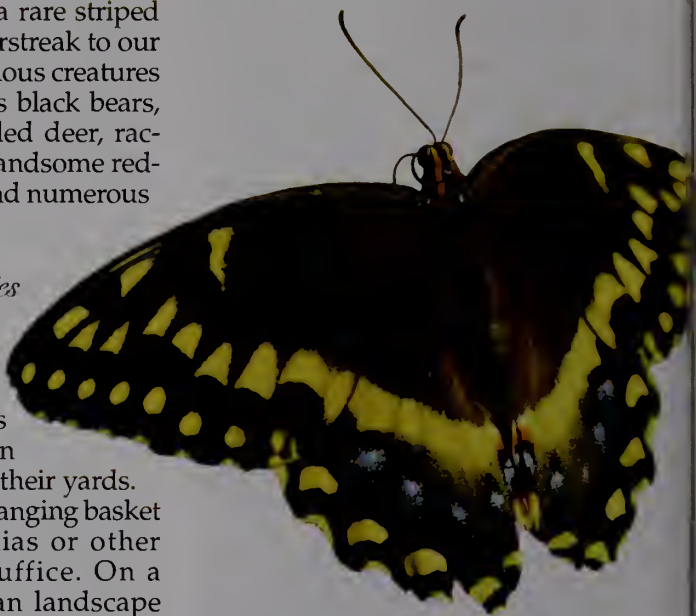
clover, goldenrod, yarrow and sunflower. It is important to include host plants for egg-laying females such as milkweed for monarchs, spicebush or sassafras for spicebush swallowtails, hibiscus for gray hairstreaks, alfalfa for orange sulfurs and Queen Anne's lace and parsley for black swallowtails. Like other life forms, butterflies require fresh water, shelter, space and food for survival.

Water

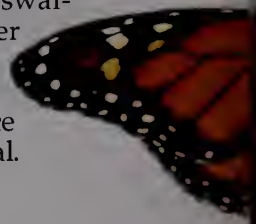
Mud-puddling is a phenomenon where numerous butterflies obtain moisture and vital nutrients and minerals from damp areas. Allow a shallow puddle to form in your garden and add salt periodically to provide essential sodium.

Space

Unimpeded areas of sunlight are necessary for butterflies to bask or perch to absorb warmth for flight



As its name implies, the butterfly bush is an excellent choice when looking for plants that provide a good source of nectar. (Above left) The tiger swallowtail butterfly was adopted in 1991 as the state insect and can be seen adorning Virginia license plates throughout the state.



of Butterflies



A well laid out butterfly garden can add vibrant colors to an area and bring hours of enjoyment to those who simply like to take the time to watch wildlife.

and feeding. Provide adequate open space preferably in the center of your garden. A butterfly garden should have southern exposure so that nectar flowers can have constant, maximum sunlight throughout the day. Females often lay their eggs on host plants in the sun.

Shelter

Butterflies need protection from inclement weather, urban development and predators such as birds, spiders, mantids and parasitic flies and wasps. Consider locating gardens and host plants near windbreaks like fruit trees which also serve as food sources.

These creatures will roost for the night in bushes, crevices, building eaves or beneath leaves. A trellis, pillar, wall or fence lined with wisteria, honeysuckle or clematis are choice plants that offer cover around a garden periphery.

Food

A natural setting is crucial to the survival of butterflies. DO NOT use pesticides or herbicides which will kill these creatures and other beneficial insects at all stages. To protect specific plants from egg-layers and thus from being devoured by larva, assemble netting over a select portion of your garden.

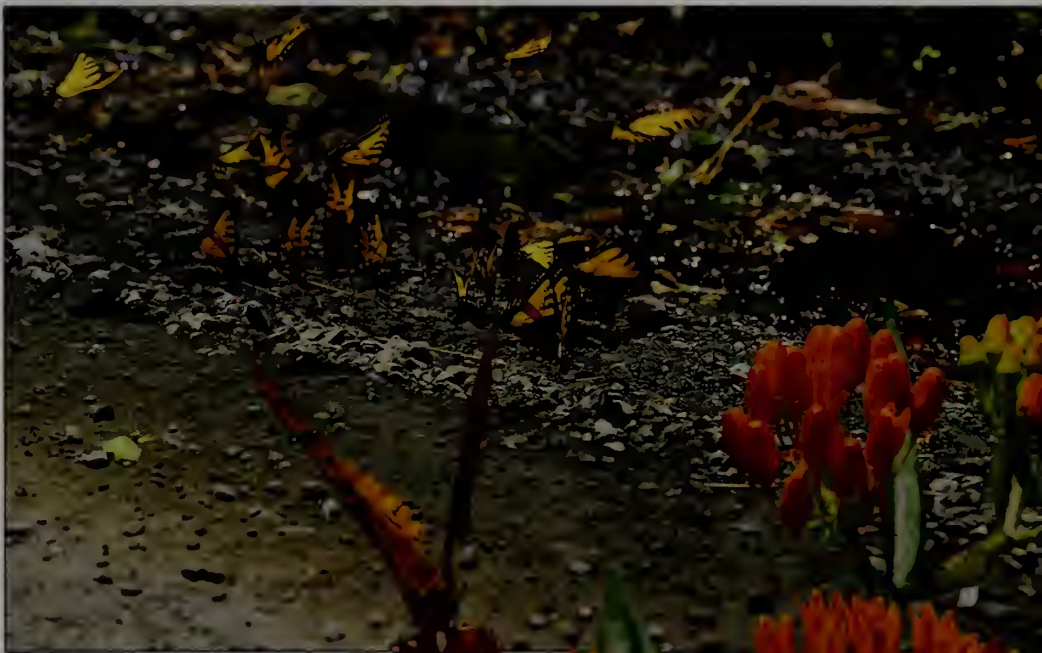
Butterflies are particularly fond of strong, sweet fragrances such as sweet allyssum, honeysuckle, lan-

tana, lavender, lilac and butterfly bush. Select plants that blossom at different times for continuing nectar.

To learn more about this year's Butterfly Count, contact Donald Schwab, Nongame Biologist, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (Region 1 Office), 5806 Mooretown Road, Williamsburg, Virginia 23188. A mere \$2.00 entitles one to participate in all statewide butterfly counts for one year.

To become more involved, write North American Butterfly Association, 4 Delaware Road, Morristown, New Jersey 07960 or phone (201) 285-0907. □

Emily Grey is an attorney and also a freelance writer and photographer living on the Eastern Shore.



(Above) Swallowtail and monarch butterflies are two of the 157 different kinds of butterflies found in Virginia.



Journal

Hunting For The Right Answers

Join the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries at the Virginia Outdoor Sportsman Show on August 7-9 at The Showplace on Mechanicsville Tnpk. in Richmond. If you enjoy hunting, fishing, or just like spending time in the outdoors, then this is your chance to talk directly with the experts from DGIF. The Department will have game wardens, wildlife biologists, and a host of trained professionals to answer all your questions and help you buy your hunting and fishing licenses.

Don't miss your opportunity to learn more about:

- * The Latest Game & Fishing Laws
- * Best Hunting Locations
- * Harvest Information Program (HIP)
- * Hunter Education Classes
- * Wildlife Harvest Information
- * Boating Safety Information
- * Lifetime Licenses
- * "Becoming An Outdoors-Woman" Program
- * Virginia Wildlife Magazine
- * DGIF Web Page
- * Wildlife Mapping Program
- * Applications For The New Turkey Wildlife Conservation License Plate

The Department will also be handing out free copies of the Hunting, Fishing and Wildlife Watchers guides to everyone stopping by our booths. Remember, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries is your total wildlife agency; we're here to serve you the sportsmen and women of Virginia. □



Book Review:

Big Game on a Budget

So, you say you have big plans for the upcoming hunting season and like most of us you're limited on just how much you can spend. Bob Gooch, who has hunted for over half a century in Virginia and throughout the country, is someone who has never let a little thing like the lack of money keep him from enjoying a hunt of a lifetime.

Big Game on a Budget, is a guidebook full of helpful tips that will aim the most financially-challenged hunter in the right direction when planning a trip to hunt big game. No matter whether you want to pursue white-tailed deer, moose, elk, antelope or even wild boar, Bob has shown that where there's a will there's a way. Want to know which single gun is best suited for hunting most big game species or how to go about planning a self-guided hunt, Bob's got the answer. How about swapping hunts with someone or if you're planning on traveling a great distance, think about taking along a couple of hunting buddies to help defer some of the cost.

From clothing to how to care for your trophies, Bob details the finer points of how to organize a big game hunt. *Big Game on a Budget* is also an excellent reference book. A listing of names, addresses, and telephone numbers of various state and provincial game agencies will give you a chance to gather important information pertaining to your hunting desires.

As with many of the books that Bob Gooch has written, *Big Game on a Budget* is reader friendly and truly helpful to anyone who likes to hunt. So before you say you can't afford it, I recommend that you first invest in a copy of this book. I guaranty that the money saved from reading this book will pay for itself time and time again.

Big Game on a Budget, is available in stores or you can order directly from Bob Gooch at Route 2, Box 865 Troy, Virginia 22974-9735. Cost is \$9.95 plus \$1.50 for postage and tax (Total \$11.45). □



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No matter whether you're a young hunter admiring some of the trophy bucks on display or shopping for the latest in outdoor gear, the Virginia Sportsman Show will appeal to the whole family.

Hooked for Life

*Learning can be fun
for kids if you use
the right lure.*

by Tom Barnett

Trevor Ruble is much more than a teacher. He is an innovator and a motivator who loves kids and fishing. He expanded his fifth-grade teaching experience to the outdoors by providing kids + fishing = fun!

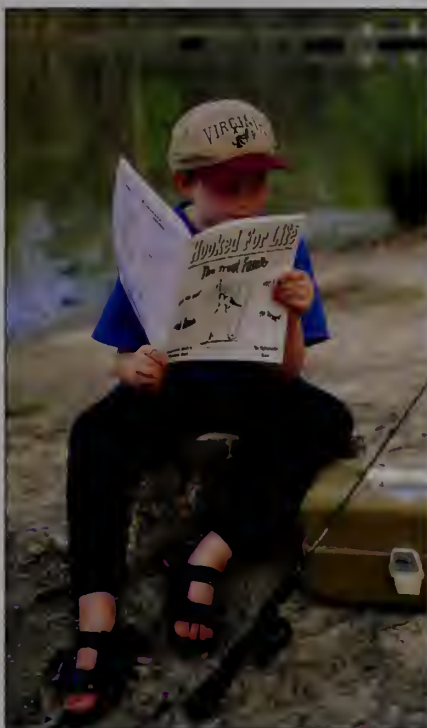
Trevor Ruble began fishing as a youngster and is now teaching fishing to the anglers of tomorrow. "Learning to fish can be as valuable as learning algebraic fractions or conjugating verbs. It is an interactive way to learn science," says Ruble.

Trevor first provided leadership by sponsoring a fishing club at his school, Kipps Elementary in Blacksburg, Virginia, called "Bass Busters." Members were taught the basics of fishing during weekly outings. Trevor has developed and taken his clinics to schools, scout troops, 4-H Clubs, and various other organizations. "The clinics are a great way to bring kids and families together," says Ruble.

As the popularity of teaching kids fishing grew, so did the realization that something bigger was needed. "Hooked for Life" was conceived. "Hooked for Life" is a quarterly magazine geared toward helping children learn about the world of fish and fishing. Through games, readings, stories, etc., it provides motivational incentives for young anglers to learn about fishing basics and environmental conservation. Ruble's commitment to youth an-

gling through "Hooked for Life" is being acknowledged by means of an endorsement from the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries' Aquatic Education Program.

This commitment to youth angling education is also a top priority of the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF). Through their Community Angling Education Project, DGIF provides assistance to organizations like "Hooked



Lee Walker

for Life" statewide for teaching our youth about fish and fishing. Planning assistance, lesson plans, instructional aids, and student materials are all a part of the project.

"Hooked for Life" targets kids ages 5 to 12-years-old. It can be used as a supplement to angling education programs or for self instruction. Membership is a mere \$10 annually.

"Hooked for Life" is full of facts and fun. Youngsters will find themselves coloring numbered line drawings of various species of fish, learning "how-to" bait hooks and present artificial lures. Habitat information, simple biology, and fishing facts are also taught through featured cartoon characters such as Sally's Bait Shop, Buckethead and Captain Jack's Tackle Box, and sto-

ries from Uncle Bobber's Fish Tales. The "Tell Me Why?" section encourages children to write in their questions about fishing. The magazine stresses fishing safety, ethical angling, and catch and release.

Today, through angling education programs, we have a better opportunity to pass on the fishing tradition to the anglers of tomorrow. For this concept to grow, support is needed. Adult volunteers are needed to teach kids about fishing. Giving your time as an instructor or coordinating an angling clinic in your area will help the fishing future for kids who do not have a relative or mentor to teach them. While Trevor Ruble makes guest clinic appearances at no charge in his local area his time and travel is limited.

Program and magazine sponsorship is also needed. A donation of basic tackle, supplies, incentives, or even an ad in the "Hooked for Life" magazine will help fund these endeavors.

Interested parties may contact Trevor Ruble at "Hooked for Life," 1100 George Edward Via, Christiansburg, VA 24073 or call him at (540) 381-2336. E-mail is available at reelman@bev.net or mtruble@ad.com.

Anne Skalski-Windle, Aquatic Education Coordinator for DGIF can be contacted at (804) 367-6778 regarding the Community Angling Education Project.

Several DGIF publications are available that help identify fish and public places to fish. "The Angler's Guide to Freshwater Sportfish," and "The Freshwater Fishing Guide" are free publications. Anglers may contact their local DGIF regional or district offices or the main office (see gray card for listings).

DGIF maintains 29 wildlife management areas (WMA's). Many have lakes or ponds. The booklet, "A Guide to Virginia's Wildlife Management Areas," contains 68 pages of maps and information and is available free to walk-in traffic, or by mail for \$5 (S & H). Write to VIB, P.O. Box 27563, Richmond, VA 23220. □

RECIPES

by Joan Cone

Mid-summer Treat—The Spot

A familiar summer resident of the Chesapeake Bay and Virginia's saltwater rivers is the spot (*Leiostomus xanthurus*). Spot are considered Virginia's Number One marine pan-fish by anglers. While a one pound fish is eligible for citation in the Virginia Saltwater Fishing Tournament, most spot taken by rod and reel are in the eight to 10-ounce range.

Compensating for the spot's small size is its popularity as a delicious eating fish. If you wish to avoid bones, follow these instructions for poaching and then use the cooked, flaked meat in the casserole recipe in the menu.

Poaching Spot

9 to 12 spot, cleaned and scaled
1 tablespoon flour
½ cup chopped onion
½ cup celery

Preheat oven to 350°F. Shake flour in a large size (14-inches x 20-inches) Reynolds Oven Bag and place in a 2-inch deep roasting pan. Spread onion and celery in bottom of bag. Arrange spot, in a single layer, on top of vegetables in bag. Close oven bag with nylon tie and cut six, ½-inch slits in top. Cook fish for 20 to 30 minutes until you can flake fish easily with a fork through the bag. Do not overcook. Remove all skin and bones and flake what is left for use in casseroles, fish cakes or salads.

Menu

Fish Casserole

Pouch Potato Packet

Squash Fans With Herb Butter

Peach Streusel Pie

Fish Casserole

2 cups cooked, flaked spot or similar fish

½ cup chopped onion
4 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons flour
½ cup milk
½ cup tomato sauce
Salt and pepper to taste
¼ cup grated Cheddar cheese
½ cup soft bread crumbs

Cook onion in butter until tender. Blend in flour; add milk gradually and cook until thick, stirring constantly. Add tomato sauce, salt, pepper and flaked fish. Place in a well-greased 1½-quart casserole dish. Combine cheese and crumbs; sprinkle over casserole. Bake in a moderate oven, 350° F. for 20 to 25 minutes or until brown and thoroughly hot. Serves 4.

While your fish casserole is cooking in the oven, you can use your outdoor grill for the next recipe.

Squash Fans with Herb Butter

Heavy duty aluminum foil
¼ cup butter or margarine, softened
½ teaspoon thyme leaves
½ teaspoon basil leaves
Salt and pepper to taste
2 medium yellow squash
2 medium zucchini

In a bowl, cream together butter, thyme, basil, salt and pepper; set aside. To make squash fans, slice each squash lengthwise, making cuts ¼-inch apart leaving the slices attached at the stem end. Tear off two 18 x 14-inch sheets of heavy duty aluminum foil. Fan out squash slices. Place one yellow squash fan and one zucchini fan on lower half of each foil sheet. Top each squash with 1 tablespoon herb butter. Fold upper half of foil over food meeting bottom edges of foil. Seal edges together making a tight ½-inch fold. Fold again. Allow space for heat cir-

culatation and expansion. Repeat to seal each side. Grill 20 minutes on medium in covered grill or until vegetables are tender. To serve, cut an "X" in top of packet and fold foil back. Serves 4.

Peach Streusel Pie

¼ cup plus 2 teaspoons flour
½ cup granulated sugar
¼ cup light brown sugar, firmly packed
¼ teaspoon cinnamon
5 cups peeled, pitted and sliced peaches, tossed in 1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice
1 fully baked 9-inch pie shell

For the sugar and spice streusel:

¾ cup flour
½ teaspoon cinnamon
¼ teaspoon nutmeg
¼ cup granulated sugar
¼ cup light brown sugar, firmly packed
½ cup chopped walnuts
5 tablespoons cold butter, cut into small chunks

Blend together the flour, two sugars and cinnamon in a large mixing bowl. Add the peach slices and toss well. Pile the filling into the baked pie shell. For the streusel, combine the flour, cinnamon, nutmeg and two sugars in a small mixing bowl. Stir in the walnuts. Add the butter and using two round-bladed knives, cut into the nut mixture until reduced to small flakes. Cover the top of the pie evenly but completely with the streusel, pressing it down lightly over the fruit. Bake in a preheated 375° F. oven for about 1 hour, until the peaches are tender and the filling bubbles in spots through the streusel, looking like cooked jam. Serve barely warm or at room temperature. Makes one 9-inch pie. □



naturally Wild

by Spike Knuth

Indigo Bunting

Passerina cyanea

Your first sighting of this bird may fool you into thinking that you've seen a bird that has lost its way from the tropics. One of its scientific names in "cyanea" meaning "dark blue." The male indigo bunting is colored with a variety of blues, including indigo or ultramarine blue. Actually, when the sun reflects from this little bird, its head and neck are a darker blue, fading to cerulean and even a bluish-green or aquamarine on the rest of its body. Yet, if in the shade or seen from a certain angle, it actually looks black, which in itself is a good field mark. It is black around its eyes and its wing coverts are black to a very dark brown. The female is just a plain olive-brown or grayish-green on its head and back and a lighter buffy-olive on its breast and belly, with light, almost indiscernible streaks on its sides.

The male is not very vocal early in the year when other birds are singing away. He waits for July and August when his mate is on her nest. Then he seems to delight in sitting in conspicuous locations and singing incessantly despite the heat. The female gets very secretive as she builds her nest and begins laying and incubating. The nest is normally built low to the ground in thick shrubs or blackberry brambles on the edges of clearings or brushy hill-sides or slopes. It consists of grasses, leaves, plant stems, and leaves, and is finished with fine grasses and animal hair to form a compact cup. About four pale bluish-white eggs makes up a normal clutch and two broods are raised.

It seems as if they often nest in small colonies. Where you find one indigo bunting male, you'll find others and they seem to compete for being the most vociferous. They will



dart in and out of brushy vegetation and treetops flashing their variable and changing shades of blue, chattering and fussing in the summer sun.

Indigo buntings feed mainly on insects and larvae such as canker worms and caterpillars of various

kinds during the summer, turning to wild berries and seeds later towards fall. They begin to flock-up in early-September and migrate as far south as the Bahamas, Cuba and Panama.

July Afield

by Jack Randolph

Think of July and you think of days at the beach, fireworks, the Fourth of July, hot weather, evening thunderstorms and cooking supper on the grill out back. You think of fresh sweet corn, juicy red tomatoes and you think of vacations and relaxation.

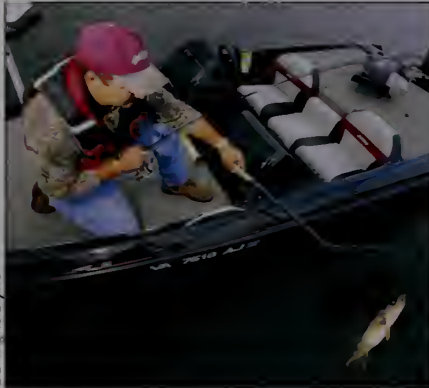
Once upon a time, when I was a young man, we were told that the work weeks were getting shorter, that we would have more time for leisure, but somehow that never seemed to happen. For many of us the work weeks became longer and one job often hasn't been enough. Leisure time has become rare and much more valuable. We find that more of us are seeking solitude and recreation in an ever-shrinking environment. We are discovering that the only way we can actually enjoy the recreation we seek is by sharing, by respecting the rights of others and by hoping that others respect our rights as well.

Nowhere is the need to share more evident than it is on our waters. We have more boats registered in Virginia than ever before, but we have no more waters today than we had 10 years ago. The waiting lines at the ramps are longer and our patience is tested more often.

Last year July found us in the beginning of a major drought and many waters were either low or getting that way. Lake Anna drew anglers' attention with an unprecedented outbreak of excellent July landlocked striped bass fishing. Lake Moomaw in Bath and Allegheny counties provided good fishing for big brown trout, along with bass and crappie in a beautiful mountain setting.

For those who couldn't get away from the city, July still has something to offer. Richmonders, for example, will catch those big flathead catfish in the James River within the city limits. Above the city and for many

miles to the west smallmouth bass fishing is usually excellent during the hot summer months. Fredericksburg has much the same to offer. It has smallmouth in the Rappahannock River above the city and blue catfish in the tidal waters below.



©Dwight Dyke

In recent years the popularity of fly fishing has increased greatly. Fly fishing enthusiasts find wonderful opportunities on the smallmouth waters of the James, Rappahannock and the Shenandoah rivers. For largemouth bass and large bluegill, the Chickahominy Lake and river near Williamsburg are about as good as it gets for the fly fisherman. Lake Chesdin is also a good bet for bass this month, but because of very heavy pleasure boat traffic, fishing here is best early in the morning, at night or during inclement weather.

Night fishing for walleye is productive on Claytor Lake this month, but wherever these delicious fish are found, night fishing is apt to be productive. Lake Anna and Lake Chesdin, for example, host excellent populations of walleye that should be vulnerable to the night fisherman. South Holston Reservoir also produces good catches of walleyes this month where trolling with nightcrawlers has become a productive method.

Crappie also offer some exciting night fishing. The waters near Walkers Dam on the Chickahominy are

popular with the nocturnal fishermen. Night fishing for crappie is also favored by anglers on Buggs Island Lake who fish around the Clarksville Bridges and on Lake Moomaw.

Because of horsepower limitations on outboard motors, the Suffolk lakes—Lakes Burnt Mills, Cohoon, Meade, Prince and Western Branch—are not populated by ski boats and water skiers during the summer. Lake Prince and Western Branch are well-known for their big bluegill and shellcrackers during the summer, when good catches of bass are also possible. If the weather is particularly hot, check out fishing live bait close to the aerators on Lake Western Branch where striped bass and white perch are likely to be caught.

July is also the time for bowhunters to start sharpening their skills for the fast-approaching bowhunting season. One skill often neglected is using tree stands, a skill that must be mastered as well as using archery tackle. If you have built home-made tree stands in the woods this is the time to check them out. Be sure the materials from which they are made are not rotted. Tree stands that are no longer to be used or are unsafe should either be repaired or removed. An unsafe tree stand left in the woods can be a deadly trap for an unsuspecting hunter.

Of course, July is the month when the seasons for hunting webless migratory birds are set and when the framework for the waterfowl season is announced. This is the time to dig out the hand trap or to return to the skeet ranges to sharpen our wing-shooting skills in preparation for the seasons to come. It is also the time to start reloading ammunition, if for no other reason than to hasten the days that lie between us and the opening of the hunting season. □



Photo Tips

by Lynda Richardson

Oh, Those Friendly Skies (Part Two)

As you may recall in the previous column in June, "Oh Those Friendly Skies (Part One)," we discussed today's tighter airline regulations for carry-on baggage, the newest X-ray machines and how these regulations affect photographers. Now I would like to make some packing suggestions which hopefully will make your trip a little easier.

Traveling with film can be a problem especially now that airports worldwide are installing the latest, high powered, airport X-ray machines for zapping both carry-on and checked luggage. This is why I always hand carry all of my film, at least I'll see what happens to it and can try and avoid problems. To make it easier to get through each security check point, I remove all film from boxes beforehand and make sure each cartridge is in a clear plastic container. Some film comes in grey plastic cans but those won't work. Security wants to see what you have in those containers. If your local camera shop recycles canisters then you can probably trade for the clear plastic variety. Once all the film is in clear plastic, I stuff everything in clear Zip-lock bags, again for ease of inspection. I carry the film on the top of my camera bag or in a shoulder bag which makes it easy to pull out for a hand check.

Internationally, handling film can be a nightmare. The major airports, like Heathrow in London, are particularly paranoid and would rather let you miss your flight than allow you to pass without X-raying your film. (Despite the fact that they see it is film.) Most security guards don't care about the safety of your film but

I've found that the majority of the time you can avoid X-rays simply by being friendly, patient and insistent on a hand check.

As airline regulations tighten down on the number of bags you can check many people are leaving their heavy tripods behind. I have solved this problem by using the "biggest duffel bag in the universe." I have never had a problem sending this bag through as checked luggage except when it weighed over 70 pounds. Then, I lightened the load or paid excess baggage charges. In this bag I have been able to stuff a tripod, light stands, umbrellas, soft boxes, miscellaneous camera gear and, heaven forbid, a few clothes. I have stuffed battery packs and chargers into boots and have wrapped short lenses and tripod heads in coats. Once I get to my destination if I have any trouble lugging the monster bag I simply open it and pull out the tripod and light stands which are already secure in cloth Temba equipment carrying cases.

Checked bags need protection especially if you are traveling through airports such as Miami International and JFK in New York. I have found that combination locks work better than key locks. I use two combination locks on each bag. I place one through the zipper holes closest to the bag and the second at the end holes. Make sure each lock has a different combination. Usually having two locks makes it just difficult enough that your bag should be passed over for another. If any handles or locks hang away from your bags it might be a good idea to duct tape them down for a lower profile. Sometimes a handle or lock can be

ripped off accidentally as it goes through baggage transfers and carousel trauma.

The airlines are also clamping down on carry-on luggage and occasionally I have had problems with stewards asking to check my "airline approved" bag at the gate. In such cases, I simply remove the camera backpack and give them the empty case. My only warning in doing this is that you make sure they check the bag to your FINAL destination...not just the next connection.

A few final suggestions: Pack your photo vest. Don't wear it unless you want to draw attention to the possible valuables in your baggage. Watch your carry-ons at all times and store them near your seat in the airplane. First, you don't want some person sticking something in your bag when you're not looking and second, you don't want someone walking off with your property. Don't forget to bring extra batteries as you can't always count on finding the type you need at the last minute, no matter where you go. If traveling someplace rainy, dusty or snowy take a box of small and large Zip-lock bags for protecting cameras and lenses. Once I get to my destination, I place each lens and camera in its own Zip-lock bag inside the camera bag whether the bag is waterproof or not. If the lens is too big for one Zip-lock, I combine several with duct tape to protect the lens.

Traveling with film and photography equipment can be a breeze or an aggravating nightmare. With proper planning you can soar through the trials and tribulations of airport travel. Bon Voyage! □



On The Water

by Kathy Gillikin, Boating Education Instructor

New Boating Laws for 1998 and 1999

The Virginia General Assembly approved several new boating laws for boat operators, boating businesses and government groups during the 1998 session, with input from an extensive random boating survey completed by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF). With the increase of registered boats each year, it is no wonder that the laws continue to change to accommodate the growing boating population. VDGIF continues to regulate recreational boating with safety in mind for those near or on the water and reminds you to "Be Responsible, Be Safe, Have Fun and Take a Boating Safety Course." The new laws are listed below.

All Motorboat Operators:

1. No wake is defined as the slowest possible speed required to maintain steerage and headway. This definition is effective January 1, 1999.

2. It shall be unlawful to operate any motorboat greater than no wake speed when within 50 feet or less of docks, piers, boathouses, boat ramps and people in the water. This change does not prohibit the pulling of a skier with a rope of less than 50 feet in length, and is effective January 1, 1999.

Personal Watercraft Operators:

1. A person shall be guilty of reckless operation who operates any personal watercraft recklessly or at a speed or in such a manner so as to endanger the life, limb or property of any person, which shall include, but not be limited to: (1) weaving through vessels that are underway, stopped, moored or at anchor while

exceeding a reasonable speed under the circumstances and traffic conditions existing at the time; (2) following another vessel or person on water skis or similar device, crossing the path of another vessel, or jumping the wake of another vessel more closely than is reasonable and prudent, having due regard to the speed of both vessels and the traffic on and the condition of the waters at the time; (3) crossing between the towing vessel and a person on water skis or other device; or (4) steering toward an object or person and turning sharply in close proximity to such object or person in order to spray or attempt to spray the object or person with the wash or jet spray of the personal watercraft. (Note: Such motorboat operation as described is already considered reckless operation, punishable by a fine up to \$2,500 and up to one year in jail. Effective with this change on January 1, 1999 personal watercraft operators convicted of a second or subsequent offense shall lose their personal watercraft operating privileges for a period of twelve months).

2. It shall be unlawful for any person to operate a personal watercraft, or the owner or any person having control to authorize or knowingly permit a person to operate a personal watercraft, unless the operator is at least 16 years of age, except any person age 14 or 15 may operate a personal watercraft if they have successfully completed an approved boating safety education course, carry proof of successful completion of such course, and show this proof upon request by a law enforcement officer. This change is effective January 1, 1999.

3. It shall be unlawful to operate

any personal watercraft greater than no wake speed when within 50 feet or less of docks, piers, boathouses, boat ramps, people in the water, and vessels other than personal watercraft. This change does not prohibit the pulling of a skier with a rope of less than 50 feet in length, and is effective January 1, 1999.

Boating Businesses and State Government:

Several changes to the laws will affect boating businesses, state government, and in some cases, those who rent personal watercraft; for a complete guide to all the changes taking effect, write to the Information Desk, Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, 4010 West Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia 23230-1104 to obtain a copy of the 1998 *Changes to the Boating Laws* brochure.

The boating laws enacted this year, together with the boating laws already in effect, set the community standards for boat operator conduct and responsibilities. The most important thing any boater can do to ensure all boaters will have safe and enjoyable boating experiences is to know the laws and comply with them. The best way for boaters to become familiar with the laws is to take a boating safety course.

To learn about a boating safety class near you, call the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries' Boating Education Coordinator in Richmond at 804-367-1125 or the BOAT US Course Line at 1-800-245-BOAT (2628). Taking a boating safety class this summer or fall will be especially important for youth who will be age 14 or 15 next summer, and want to operate a personal watercraft. □

"Hoo" Can Help Protect Virginia's Nongame and Endangered Species?

Here is your chance to help wildlife, own a true work of art, and help raise funds for Virginia's Nongame and Endangered Species Program. David Turner, of Turner Sculpture on Virginia's Eastern Shore is continuing to capture the essence of Virginia's nongame and endangered species with a fourth bronze sculpture in his Endangered Species Series. These sculptures help raise funds for Virginia's Nongame and Endangered Species Program.

Peering into the darkness of night, David has chosen the northern saw-whet owl to cast into bronze. Of the many species of owls found in Virginia, the small northern saw-whet owl is a rare, transient visitor to the state. Little is known about this nocturnal inhabitant and its migratory habits. Its range includes Alaska, Canada, United States and Mexico.

Like the northern flying squirrel, the piping plover and the sold-out Berwick's wren, this sculpture is a limited edition of 200. The northern saw-whet owls will be cast and sold solely to benefit the Virginia Nongame and Endangered Species Program (the program responsible for the manage-



ment and protection of all the Commonwealth's rare and endangered wildlife). The money raised from the sale of all sculptures will provide the program with over 1/10th of its present operating budget.

Each sculpture has a purchase price of \$325. Turner Sculpture will receive \$175 to cover the production cost; the remaining \$150 will be sent to the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries as your contribution to Virginia's Nongame and Endangered Species Fund. Each piece sold will include a certificate of origin and a letter confirming your contribution to the future of Virginia's wildlife. A tax advisor should be consulted regarding the personal tax deductibility of this contribution.

You may order either the northern saw-whet owl, piping plover or the northern flying squirrel by sending a check for \$325 for each signed and numbered sculpture to: Turner Sculpture, Box 128, Onley, VA 23418. For credit card orders call: 757/787-2818. ☐

VirginiaWildlife
Calendar
1998-1999

Want To Get Really Wild?

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If you're looking for information on hunting, fishing and the outdoors then you'll want to order the new 1998-1999 Virginia Wildlife Calendar.

Whether it's finding out when bald eagles gather on the James River, or when deer lose their antlers, the Virginia Wildlife Calendar helps put the wild back into wildlife. No other calendar gives you so much for so little. Interesting facts, special events, award-winning photography, natural history of animals in Virginia, plus a guide to knowing the best times to hunt, fish and watch wildlife.

Remember our special 1998-1999 Virginia Wildlife Calendar starts in September and runs through next August. So, hurry! Supplies are limited.

At only \$6.50 each, you'll want them for your home, office, friends and relatives.

Order yours today! See the gray order card inside for details.

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